



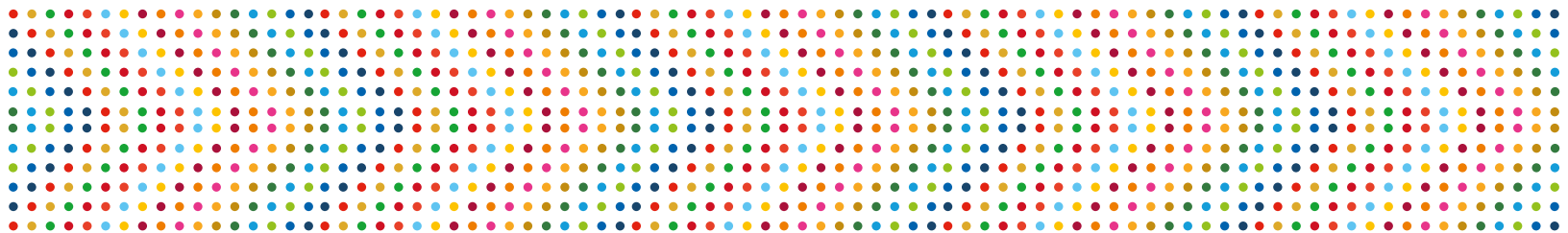
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ZAMBIA



UN Common Country Analysis Update



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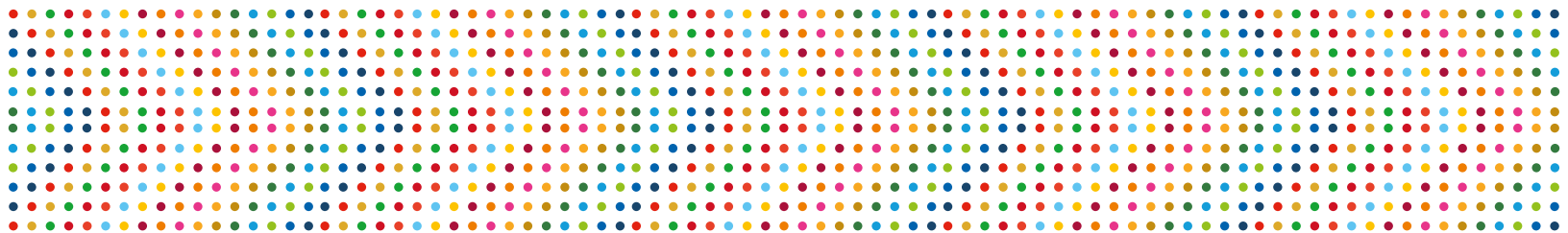
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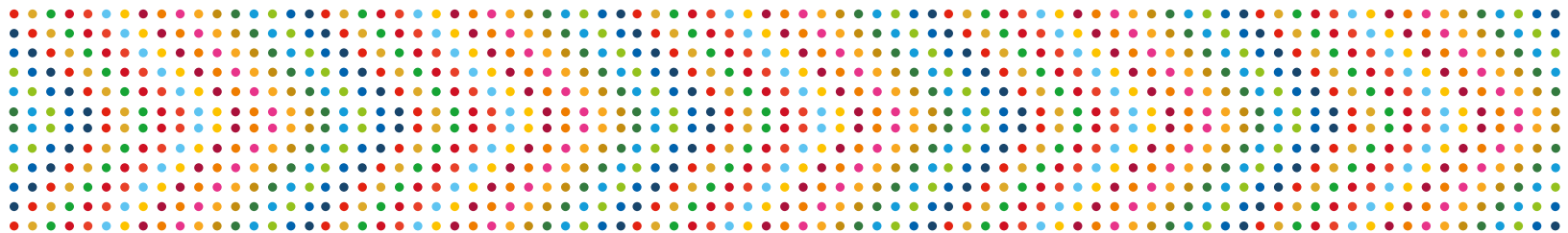


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

8NDP	Eighth National Development Plan
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AML	Money Laundering Authority
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
AU	African Union
BoZ	Bank of Zambia
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVD	Cardio-vascular Disease
DFA	Development Finance Assessment
DMMU	Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FISP	Farmer Input Support Programme
FSP	Food Security Pack
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product



GHI	Global Hunger Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFF	Illicit Financial Flow
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
LCMS	Living Conditions Monitoring Survey
LDC	Least Developed Country
LSHE	Life Skills and Health Education
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MoFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MoGEE	Ministry of Green Economy and Environment
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
MT	Metric Tonne
MW	Megawatt
NAMS	National Agriculture Mechanisation Strategy
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCD	Non-communicable Disease
NDC	Nationally-determined Contribution
NDS	National Disability Survey
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OPPI	Promoting Private Power Investment
PWD	Person with Disabilities
REA	Rural Electrification Authority





SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SWOP	State of the World Population
TEVET	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VSU	Victim Support Unit
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZAMPHIA	Zambia Population-based HIV Impact Assessment
ZamStats	Zambia Statistics Agency
ZDHS	Zambia Demographic and Health Survey
ZEMA	Zambia Environmental Management Agency
ZMW	Zambian Kwacha
ZWIP	Zambia Water Investment Programme



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zambia attained lower middle-income country status in 2011; however, in 2022 the World Bank re-classified the country to low-income status. The country faces several challenges, among them high levels of poverty and inequality; food insecurity; high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth; a heavy debt burden; natural disasters; disease outbreaks; and the impacts of climate change.

To address the country's developmental challenges, currently the Government is implementing the Eighth National Development Plan, 2022-2026 (8NDP). In its efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Zambia is making significant progress, although most of the targets are off-track. The United Nations (UN) is supporting implementation of the SDGs through its Cooperation Framework, which is divided into four pillars, namely People, Prosperity, Planet, and Peace.

PEOPLE



SDG 1: End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere

Poverty in Zambia increased from 54.4 percent in 2015 to 60 percent in 2022, with 2.5 million people living below the poverty line. Of the people living in poverty, 80 percent are in rural areas; in the same period overall rural poverty levels rose from 76.6 percent to 78.8 percent. In urban areas, overall poverty increased from 23.4 to 31.9 percent. The country's Gini coefficient increased from 0.546 in 2015, to 0.507 in 2022.

To address poverty, inequality and vulnerability, Zambia has instituted Robust social protection mechanisms.



SDG 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

More than 1.4 million persons experience serious food insecurity; to address hunger and malnutrition, the Government has been promoting increased levels of crop production and productivity.

The prevalence of hunger in the country remains extremely high. To reduce food insecurity, and accelerate the achievement of SDG 2, Zambia has developed a food systems transformation strategic document with five pathways, designed in line with the Global Food Systems Action Tracks.



SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages

Zambia healthcare system is progressing and the country is strengthening the system towards universal health coverage (UHC). However, access to basic health services between urban and rural areas is inequitable. The main barriers towards UHC are economic, geographic, epidemiological, cultural, and inequitable provision of health services.

The country has one of the highest human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) incidence and prevalence rates in the world. Other major diseases are malaria, tuberculosis, cardio-vascular diseases, and cancer.





SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

In 2022, the Government introduced the Education for All and the Free Education policies, abolishing tuition fees at early childhood, primary and secondary levels. This has led to a 34 percent increase in school enrolment, with over 2 million students returning to school.

The Government has also increased investment in education infrastructure and human resources.



SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

While there has been some improvement, gender equality in Zambia remains a challenge, due to cultural and traditional practices.

The Government, with support from the UN, is implementing policy reforms to address gender issues.



SDG 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

The Government is implementing policies and programmes to increase access to clean and safe water and sanitation in both urban and rural areas.

Concerning environmental sustainability, the Government is reviewing various policies, to incorporate emerging issues and strengthen aspects on green growth.

PROSPERITY



SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

Zambia relies heavily on hydroelectricity; given the effects of climate change, the energy agenda focuses on diversifying the nation's energy sector and ensuring equitable access to clean and renewable energy for all populations. This is being promoted through various public and private sector strategies.



SDG 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

The Government is committed to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value. In the past 5 years there has been growth in the labour force; however, because over 70 percent of employment is in the informal economy many jobs do not meet decent work conditions. Moreover, the Zambian economy has not grown sufficiently to attain SDG 8.

The Government is promoting private sector growth, particularly small and medium enterprises which employ over 85 percent of Zambian labour, mostly in the informal sector.



SDG 9: Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation and Foster Innovation

Zambia has instituted several measures to promote growth in the industrial sector, which increased the value of manufacturing per capita at constant 2015 prices from United States Dollars (USD) 73.5 in 2000 to USD 98.3 in 2022.



SDG 10: Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries

According to the Gini coefficient, overall inequality in Zambia reduced from 0.546 in 2015 to 0.507 in 2022. However, this worsened from 0.434 in 2015 to 0.444 in 2022. Further, approximately 26.8 percent of the population was below the poverty line with 37.5 percent in rural and 10.6 percent in urban areas.

To improve rural living standards, the Government has taken several initiatives, through enhancement of agricultural practices targeting the rural most vulnerable populations, including the empowerment of women.

PLANET



SDG 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

In 2022, 40 percent of the population lived in urban areas, and this is projected to increase to 50.5 percent by 2030, and to 62.4 percent by 2050. Because urbanisation has generally been un-coordinated and under-financed, there are challenges of high levels of housing informality and scarcity, and acute lack of service delivery.

The Government is implementing policies and programmes to address these challenges.



SDG 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

The Government, in collaboration with the UN, has been promoting sustainable production and consumption, through adoption of environmentally-friendly production systems. In addition, programmes are being implemented to reduce food losses along production and supply chains.

Several policies and programmes have also been instituted to address the challenges in the waste management system.



SDG 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impacts

The Government has been addressing the adverse impacts of climate change to ensure that the country achieves climate resilience through a low-emission development pathway, by implementing various measures.

Further, the Government is developing a green growth strategy to attain a low-carbon, resource efficient, resilient, and socially inclusive economy by 2030.



SDG 15: Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity Loss

Zambia’s main environmental challenges are deforestation, soil erosion, water and air pollution, and wildlife depletion. These issues are being addressed through various policies, legislation and action plans.

PEACE



SDG 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels

On the 2023 Global Peace Index, Zambia’s position is at 63 out of 163 countries. While various legislation has been instituted, there are challenges in the fulfilment of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of Zambia. On Transparency International’s 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index, Zambia scored 37 on a scale from 0 (“highly corrupt”) to 100 (“very clean”), and ranked 98th out of 180 countries.

Vulnerable groups such as women, girls, persons living with HIV, internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other key populations continue to be denied gender equality and disability inclusion.

PARTNERSHIPS



SDG 17: Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Zambia’s official development assistance (ODA) receipts, were rising between 2011 and 2020. On average, the contribution of ODA has been 26 percent of the national budget. Between 2011 and 2022, the country received an average of approximately USD 150 million (Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) 2.8 billion) in multilateral, bilateral, and other grants, as well as aid. During this period, however, grant funding fell



by an average of 55 percent from approximately USD 210 million (ZMW 4 billion) to USD 95 million (ZMW 1.8 billion).

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Women and Girls

Zambia has a high Gender Inequality Index of 0.526; women and girls are more likely to be excluded than boys and men, due to such factors as regulatory and policy frameworks; legal and civil documentation; low access to social protection; low access to skills development and tertiary education; and poor services infrastructure.

While Zambia is a signatory to several international treaties on gender, and has a progressive legal framework on gender equality, the country is still lagging due to underlying cultural, religious, and patriarchal tendencies in traditional and customary rules and behaviour.

Persons with Disabilities

In 2015, prevalence of disability was estimated at 10.9 percent among adults 18 years or older, and at 4.4 percent among children 2 to 17 years old. It was higher in urban than in rural areas, and higher among females than among males.

Zambia is signatory to key conventions for the protection of the rights of PWDs, and has taken several constitutional, legal, policy, and programmatic measures to promote and protect these rights.

For PWDs, technological developments have opened new opportunities for inclusive education, employment opportunities, mobility, communication options, and effective data management, planning, and financing in service delivery. However, physical access to healthcare facilities is a challenge, due to inappropriate transport and infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

Internally Displaced Persons, Migrants, Refugees, Returnees and Other Groups

In 2023, Zambia was home to 95,518 forcibly displaced persons, of whom 72,414 refugees; 5,554 asylum-seekers; and 17,550 former refugees. In the same year, the Government approved the National Refugee Policy, to harmonise the legal and policy frameworks, and facilitate increased access to rights for both refugees and former refugees.

Migrants use Zambia as one of the routes to their destinations, and are vulnerable to human rights violations. In 2007, the country established the Inter-agency Anti-trafficking Working Group; in 2018, became a signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and in 2022 developed a National Policy and Implementation Plan on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants.

CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS

In 2022, Zambia's main export markets were Switzerland, followed by China, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Singapore. The country's major import source was South Africa; other sources were China, United Arab Emirates, and DRC. Other trading partners were the Southern African Development Community region, the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the European Union. At the continental level, Zambia has laid the platform for its full participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area.

In line with its 2022 National Migration Policy, the country has taken steps to enhance both human mobility and trade facilitation to boost small-scale cross-border trade flows. Among the initiatives to address some of the bottlenecks at borders include one-stop border posts, the automation and use of border management information systems, and a Cross-Border Permit.





FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

Between 2016 and 2022, domestic and international financing dominated Zambia’s resource envelope. Most of the external financing was derived from debt. Over this period, Zambia borrowed heavily, which led to a debt crisis that the country is currently addressing. By 2023, the country’s debt stock was USD 14.2 billion. Between 2023 and 2024, the country reached agreements on debt treatment with its official and private creditors to restructure its debt.

Foreign direct investment remains key in the country’s economic development, and there has been significant private investment in the energy, transport, and telecommunications sectors. The inflow of remittances almost tripled between 2017 and 2021.

In 2023, the Government introduced measures to strengthen the tax system.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDGs

Zambia faces challenges to meet the agreed SDGs targets. In particular, the country’s debt burden has negatively impacted its development efforts. The debt restructuring that has been agreed with the country’s creditors will unlock the required resources for economic growth and poverty reduction; however, these resources need to be effectively allocated to critical sectors.

Given the country’s low levels of preparedness, disease outbreaks and natural disasters tend to exacerbate the country’s poverty and inequality. These occurrences lead to diversion of resources from development efforts.

Although the country has demonstrated positive economic growth, it faces macroeconomic instability, which needs to be restored, to attract private sector capital inflows and investment.



Climate change is negatively affecting various sectors and households. Resources are required to mitigate its short and long-term impacts on socio-economic growth.

Zambia’s heavy dependence on copper mining and rain-fed agricultural production exposes the country to periodic shocks. More efforts are required to diversify the economy towards other sectors.

Given the importance of data for the identification of challenges and their solutions in the implementation and monitoring of the national development agenda, the existing gaps in data processes should be supported and resourced.

Zambia is affected by, and needs to address, the various geo-political shifts and challenges, including shifting donor priorities.



INTRODUCTION

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of a country's context for sustainable development. The first CCA for Zambia was undertaken in 2021 and in line with the UN (United Nations) Development Coordination Office guidelines, the CCA is updated continuously to assist the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in making sound policies to provide effective and coordinated support to the country. It serves as an impartial, collective, and independent assessment to guide the UN, at country level, in determining its priorities for the next programming cycle, aligning its support with the country's development vision, the 2030 Agenda and the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

The CCA highlights independent analysis of the UN system which includes country contexts, opportunities, and challenges, encompassing sustainable development and programming principles (leave no one behind, human rights, gender equity and equality, refugees, migrants, peace, and security including women, and humanitarian perspectives).

Zambia's CCA update for 2023 reflects significant changes on specific dimensions relating to economic, political, governance, social, environment and climate change, and other important related areas which are key in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also highlights global and regional changes that have occurred from the time the first CCA was prepared in 2021. The analysis from the first CCA contributed to the formulation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2023-2027 which was prepared in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ).



The in-depth analysis provided by the CCA is critical in assisting the UN system in identifying priorities for the next programming cycle to provide the necessary technical and financial support to the GRZ. The report further gives thorough analysis of the current socio-economic and political situation, identifies the existing gaps, challenges, and opportunities, and plays a crucial role for the UNCT's visioning and strategic prioritisation process. The UN agencies derive their Country Programme Documents from the CCA for effective implementation of activities towards achieving the SDGs.

The second updating of the CCA for Zambia comes at an opportune time when the country has released two key surveys, namely, the Census of Population and Housing and the Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS). Therefore, the analysis will be critical in shaping the implementation of the Government's key strategies, including the 8NDP.



1



CHAPTER 1: COUNTRY CONTEXT





Zambia is a landlinked country and shares borders with eight countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe), and is a country of origin, transit and destination for trade, migrants, refugees, and transport routes in the region. The country is endowed with abundant natural mineral resources, including copper, cobalt, and precious stones, which are the main drivers of its economy. The country continues to depend heavily on the mining sector which contributes approximately 12 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Copper remains the leading contributor to its economic growth, accounting for approximately 70 percent of its export earnings, and is among the world's leading copper producing nations¹. The country is a member of both the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Despite its over-dependence on copper, the country has immense agricultural potential which has not been adequately actualised. This is due to various bottlenecks in the sector, including heavy dependence on rainfall; low access to inputs; low availability of extension services; low value-addition to agricultural products; low levels of mechanisation; a disease-prone livestock sub-sector; and ineffectiveness of the costly Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP). The cumulative result of the above is that although more than 70% of the population derives its livelihood from agriculture, the sector's contribution to GDP is less than 6 percent.

Zambia remains one of the peaceful countries on the African continent and this has been recognised regionally and internationally. The nation is considered a stable country with successful democratic elections held every five years, since independence in 1964; the elections have been observed and declared as transparent and credible by regional and international observers.

¹ Zambia is the world's seventh largest producer of copper and holds six percent of the world's known copper reserves.

The country continues to face numerous challenges, however, including high poverty levels; food insecurity and unemployment rates, particularly for the youth; heavy dependency on copper; a debt burden; natural disasters; recurring disease outbreaks; and climate change, among others.

The economy registered an average growth rate of 4.6 percent between 2014 and 2019. In 2024, the GDP is projected at 4.9 percent which is below the national target of 6-8 percent. The decline can largely be attributed to unfavourable weather conditions that have affected the agriculture sector which is one of the main contributors to its growth.

Over the years, Zambia's population has been increasing with a large demographic shift among the youngest. In 2022, the population was estimated at 19.6 million (Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats), 2022). These population shifts present a major challenge to the economy and hinder the country's aspirations of becoming a middle-income nation by the year 2030.

Zambia ranks among the countries with the highest levels of poverty and inequality globally. In 2020, the incidence of poverty worsened due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Despite the continued Government efforts in improving macroeconomic performance, addressing the high poverty levels remains a challenge. In addition, Zambia has one of the highest human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) incidence and prevalence rates in the world, currently estimated at 28,000 new annual infections among adults (aged 15-49 years) (Zambia Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (ZAMPHIA), 2023).

1.1 Political Analysis

Zambia's peace and stability provide a conducive environment for the nation to focus on developmental issues and other crises, including the debt burden, health emergencies and corruption. For instance, in the configuration of the Government





after the August 2021 elections, wide gender gaps exist in terms of women's representation in decision-making positions. Presently, there are only 26 (16 percent) elected and nominated women out of 164 (156 elected and eight nominated) Members of Parliament. The country is applauded for maintaining a woman in the seat of the vice-presidency for the second time; however, more needs to be done to ensure more representation of women in senior positions.

A well-organised and empowered youth is critical for bringing peace and economic transformation to any given country. The Government continues its efforts of empowering the youth², and they have been included in the policy-making and development processes of the country. The momentum exhibited by the Government at the highest political level to engage the youth of the country has been demonstrated through several youth fora, including development of a new National Youth Policy in 2024 to accelerate a well-resourced inclusive implementation framework.

Since coming into power in August 2021, the current Government has demonstrated political will and commitment to address the issues outlined above through the 8NDP. It is showing commitment to address many developmental challenges by providing a peaceful environment, promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability in the public sectors. Strides have been made in the review, repeal, and adoption of various pieces of legislation, policies and frameworks in the fight against corruption, strengthening human rights and rule of law, and enhancing civic and media space.

At the global level, Zambia was recently recognised in 2023 by the anti-corruption watchdog, Transparency International, for an improved Corruption Perception Index based on the reforms since 2021. However,

² The Zambian youth is grouped between ages 19 to 34 and it constitutes 26.7 percent of the national population.

some civil society organisations (CSOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) have raised concerns regarding the Government's communication and information with the public on progress against corruption. There seems to be perceived delays in investigations, prosecution, and related forfeiture of proceeds of crime, including lack of a strategy to adequately engage the public in this important delivery. An anti-corruption free environment boosts confidence for both national and international investors which is critical to spur the much-needed economic growth, increasing employment and eradicating poverty and inequality.

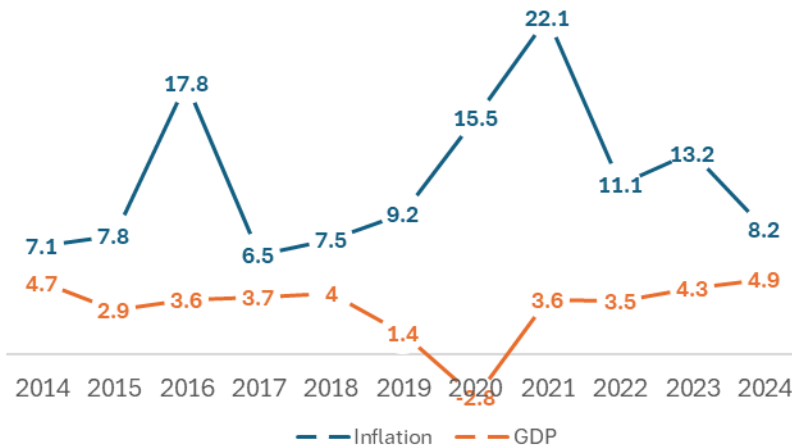
Under human rights and rule of law, the death penalty was abolished in 2022. Further, the Penal Code Amendment Act (2022) on the controversial offence of criminal defamation of the President was removed from the Zambian Statutes. Enhancing civic space and regulation of public gatherings was initiated through the Public Gathering Bill (2022) which resulted into repeal of the Public Order Act (1955, amended in 1996); this Bill needs to be finalised. The Government is also committed to undertake more constitutional reforms, including having an expanded Bill of Rights to include provisions that promote and protect economic, social, and cultural rights. The revision of the Law of Marriage Act in December 2023 further ensures the minimum age of marriage of 18 for both statutory and customary marriages.

1.2 Economic Context

Zambia's economy grew at an average rate of 5.7 percent between 2021 and 2023, primarily driven by growth in transport, wholesale and retail trade, agriculture, mining, information and communications services, finance and insurance. The economy recovered in 2021 with a growth rate of approximately 3.6 percent after recording growth rates of 1.4 percent and -2.8 percent in 2019 and 2020, respectively. The recovery was anchored on positive developments in mining and quarrying, increased



Figure 1: Trend Pattern for GDP and Inflation, 2014-2024 (%)



Source: ZamStats, 2023

prices of and demand for copper, agriculture, as well as general market confidence. As shown in Figure 1, real GDP growth for 2023 increased to approximately 4.3 percent compared to 3.5 percent recorded in 2022. This was largely attributed to the improved performance of key sectors such as agriculture, information and communication technology, construction, financial services, and mining.

Further, the country recorded a decrease in inflation from 22.1 percent in 2021 to 10.1 percent in 2022, mostly due to limited fluctuations in food prices which are the main drivers of inflation. However, the country's annual inflation rate increased from 12.9 percent to 13.1 percent in December 2023 as the Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) continued to lose value against the major trading currencies. In the financial sector, due to risks and vulnerabilities facing the banking sector, the policy rate was kept at 9.0 percent in 2021 and 2022.

In June 2023, the country reached an agreement on debt treatment with its official creditors under the G20 Common Framework to restructure its debt to enable savings of an estimated United States Dollars (USD) 5.8 billion in debt service costs. The country

also reached an agreement with both commercial and private creditors on its debt restructuring in March 2024. These are key milestones in addressing the debt situation currently affecting its economic development.

The Zambian economy has faced significant macroeconomic challenges as reflected in low growth, high fiscal deficits, unstable exchange rates, rising inflation and debt service obligations as well as low international reserves. The economy registered a decline in growth between 2017 and 2021, with an average growth of approximately 1.4 percent, largely due to unfavourable weather conditions that affected the agriculture sector, which is one of the main contributors to its growth. The decline was also influenced by the fluctuation in global copper prices in the same period. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the economic situation and rebuilding on the lost gains will need strategic approaches to put the country's economy back on track. In addition to COVID-19, the prolonged cholera outbreak that started in late 2023 is another threat to the economy.

The economic impact was severely felt by the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector,





which constitutes most businesses and is one of the largest players in job creation and economic growth. According to the Revised National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Policy of 2023, the sector accounts for 88 percent of total jobs, 97 percent of all businesses, and contributes to nearly 70 percent of GDP. Most players in this sector are informal and heavily affected by the impact, compared to the formal sector, due to the lack of social safety nets and weak labour law implementation.

The annual inflation rate continued to rise, reaching approximately 13.2 percent by December 2023, compared to a single digit achieved at the beginning of the year (see Figure 1). This was largely attributed to an increase in the prices of commodities, the depreciation of the Kwacha against major trading currencies, especially the United States Dollar (USD), upward adjustment of energy prices, especially fuel, upward pressure in food prices, and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war.

In addressing the macroeconomic challenges outlined above, the country is geared towards unlocking its economic potential to bring about the much-needed growth, especially in key sectors such as mining, energy, manufacturing, and agriculture. In addition, the Government is putting in place measures and policies aimed at boosting economic growth and sustainable development as stipulated in the 8NDP, which targets an annual economic growth rate averaging 7 percent and annual single digit inflation approximating 6 to 8 percent. These ambitious targets are clear reflections of the Government’s commitment to improve the economy and achieve its aspirations through economic diversification and job creation.

1.3 Social Dimension of the SDGs

According to the 2022 Housing and Population Census, Zambia’s population stands at 19.6 million, with an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent between

2010 and 2022. The population is relatively young with a median age of 18.4 years and is expected to double in 25 years. The dependency ratio in 2022 was estimated to be still high at 81 percent, although down from 92.5 in 2010. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has largely remained stagnant. In 2018 the TFR was 4. According to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Zambia’s TFR was 4.2 in 2023 which is still one of the highest in the world (UNFPA, SWOP, 2023). Disaggregation of the TFR by residence reveals that fertility is higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

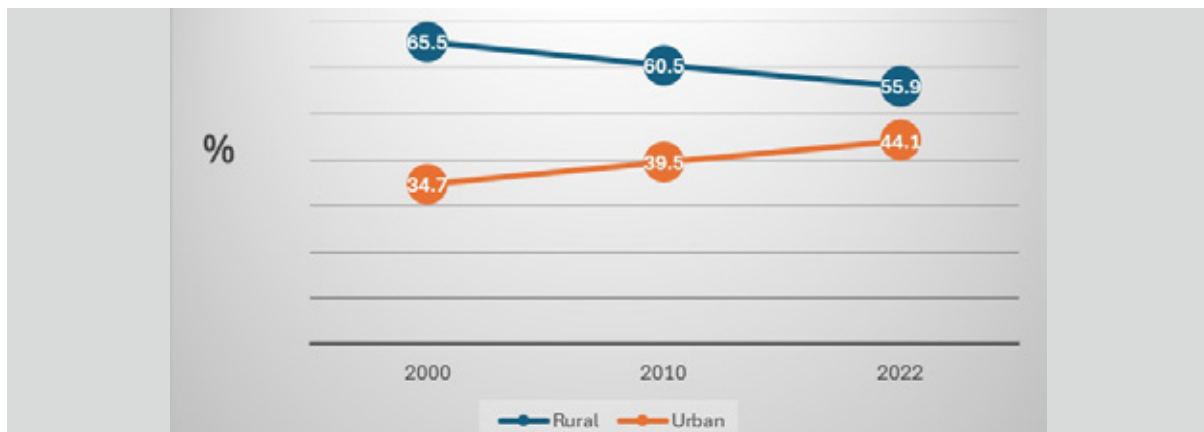
Poverty in Zambia increased from 54.4 percent in 2015 to 60 percent in 2022, with 2.5 million people living below the poverty line. Rural areas have four out of every five people living in poverty. In total, more than 9 million Zambians are living in poverty. This is particularly pronounced for children, as 70.6 percent face multiple overlapping deprivations. This has prompted focus on the Government’s strategies for targeting vulnerable populations.

Pregnancy among adolescents and young girls has been high, partly due to gaps in access to comprehensive Life Skills Health Education (LSHE) and harmful socio-gender norms and cultural practices, such as child marriage. This situation is further compounded by inadequate adolescent sexual reproductive health services and weak referral systems across defined pathways in health, social protection, and education. Despite progress made in demand-driven planning for reproductive health commodities to address sexual and reproductive health challenges, gaps still exist. Key bottlenecks include weaknesses in supply chain management and distribution, inadequate domestic financing and affordability of health services.

Zambia recorded a reduction in maternal mortality from 398 per 100,000 live births in 2013-14 to 252 per 100,000 live births in 2018. Neonatal mortality as of 2018 was 27 deaths per 1,000 live births, while infant and child mortality were at 42 and 19 deaths



Figure 2: Proportion of Populations Living in Rural and Urban Areas, 2000-2022 (%)



Source: Calculations based on Census of Population and Housing, 2000-2022

per 1,000 live births, respectively and the World Bank estimated neonatal mortality in 2021 to be 25. According to the 2023 SWOP, estimates for 2020 revealed maternal mortality ratio of 135 deaths per 100,000 live births. Skilled birth attendance increased from 64.2 percent in 2013-14 to 80.4 percent in 2018, and institutional deliveries from 67.4 percent in 2013-14 to 83.8 percent in 2018, according to the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS). Latest estimates from the 2023 SWOP show skilled birth attendance at 80 percent.

The country has the third highest incidence rate of cervical cancer in the world, with 66.4 new cases per 100,000 women as of 2018, and this challenge remains a major concern within the spectrum of sexual and reproductive health. Harmful social norms and cultural practices have adversely continuously influenced health-seeking behaviours among adolescent girls and women, thereby contributing to delays in accessing healthcare.

Life expectancy at birth is currently estimated at 63 years old (66 years for females and 60 years for males, up from 53.4 years for females and 49.2 years for males in 2010) which is below the expected 80 years in developed countries. The HIV prevalence is 11 percent (13.9 percent for women; 8 percent for

men)³. While there has been a decline in both HIV incidence and prevalence, HIV remains a key national public health concern.

The situation outlined above is further compounded by weak referral systems of functional defined pathways from health, social protection (especially for vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrants, and displaced persons), education and inadequate adolescent sexual reproductive health services. Despite progress made in demand-driven planning for reproductive health commodities to address sexual and reproductive health challenges such as high fertility, gaps still exist in readiness, agility, functionality, and accountability mechanisms in the healthcare system. Key bottlenecks are weaknesses in supply chain management, impacting 'last-mile' distribution, and gaps in domestic financing, including affordability of health services.

The Zambia Population Policy of 2019 recognises Zambia as one of the most urbanised countries in the sub-Saharan region, due to high levels of rural-urban migration and natural population growth. As highlighted in Figure 2, the percentage of the

³ HIV prevalence ranged from 1.9 percent for women aged 15–19 years to 30.5 percent for women aged 45–49 years, and from 1.8 percent for men aged 20–24 years to 28.8 percent for men aged 50–54 years.



population living in urban areas increased from 34.7 percent in 2000 to 44.2 percent in 2022. This continued decline in the proportion of the population in the rural areas and increase in the urban areas is a result of rural-urban migration, which is caused by stagnation in the rural areas coupled with unprecedented and unanticipated rises in both real and monetary incomes in urban areas.

As Zambia shares a border with multiple countries, cross-border migration frequently occurs for various reasons, including trade, employment opportunities and family ties. The 2019 Zambia Migration Profile demonstrates that Zambia has complex and dynamic migration trends, as it is a country of transit and destination for mixed migration flows.

1.4 Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

Zambia is endowed with abundant natural resources that contribute significantly to the national economy and support the livelihoods of 80 percent of the population. One-sixth of the rural population depends heavily on forests and non-forest resources for their livelihood and contribute approximately 20 percent to rural household incomes. The country has 20 National Parks and 36 Game Management Areas, that together account for about 30 percent of the country's total land area, making it one of the largest in Africa. The country has 8,017 species of organisms of which at least 615 are endemic to the country with 174 classified as rare while 31 are endangered or vulnerable (NTU International, 2021).

Zambia continues to be faced with environmental degradation manifested in deforestation, water pollution and mismanagement of solid waste, and loss of biodiversity. Climate change impacts arising from increased frequency, intensity and scale of droughts and floods could slow the country's development plans. To prevent economic losses resulting from impacts of climate change, the Government has integrated climate change into its policies and

programmes to support a low carbon and climate-resilient development pathway. The country ranks 26 out of 182 countries in the 2018 Global Climate Risk Index, and was classified as having high to extreme risk in the 2018 Climate Change Vulnerability Index.

The country's annual deforestation rate was estimated at 276,021 hectares per annum, which amounts to a potential loss of approximately 10 million hectares of forests in the next 30 years, posing a threat to the forestry sector and increasing climate change risks and further loss of biodiversity (Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, 2016). Both indirect and direct values of forests are estimated to make a GDP contribution of about 4.7 percent if well managed.

Rain-fed agriculture has been negatively affected by climate change with the sector's output projected to decline. The rural poor have experienced crop failures and death of livestock causing them to resort, in some instances, to maladaptive strategies, such as charcoal production, early child marriages and sexual exploitation of women and girls. Climate-induced migration also leads to internal displacements and migration for alternative income sources.

The 2021 Vulnerability Assessment predicted future climate scenarios of a significant decline of rainfall and an increase in temperature in the period 2021-2050. Temperatures have been predicted to rise by an average of 2-3 degrees Celsius which will negatively impact all the sectors. Agriculture, water, energy, health, and infrastructure have been negatively impacted, affecting food and water security, water quality, energy, and livelihoods of the people, especially in rural communities.

El Niño conditions have influenced weather conditions in 2023-2024, with cumulative rainfall amounts well below average across the country, negatively impacting crop yield. As a result, maize production in 2024 is foreseen to fall year-on-year (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2023).



Transboundary pest infestations are slow-onset disasters that generate increasingly significant agricultural losses in many parts of the world, including Zambia. The 2023 FAO report on Impact of Disaster shows that the fall armyworm, which causes losses through reduced harvestable yields, and the increased production cost from additional pest control investments in Zambia caused an estimated loss of USD 198 million.

To achieve a green economy, Zambia has developed several strategic frameworks and instruments including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2023), the Revised Nationally-determined Contributions (2021) and the Green Growth Strategy for mainstreaming of climate change into the planning and budgeting process.

1.5 Humanitarian-Development and Peace Nexus

Zambia is vulnerable to natural disasters such as heavy rainfall and floods, dry spells and droughts, pest infestations, and animal and human epidemics. In the past six years, the country has been impacted negatively by floods and dry spells linked to climate change. This has affected commodity prices, health, nutrition, education, energy, crop production and human placement. Non-climatic risks include price volatility, economic instability, poverty, and high inflation. Over the past 30 years, the Government estimates that a total of ZMW 13.8 billion has been lost due to floods and droughts which is equivalent to 0.4 percent of annual economic growth loss.

The Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) is responsible for coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all disaster management programmes which have implications on the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster management in the country. There has been progress in managing and coordinating disaster risk reduction (DRR) through the various established institutions and the legal and policy frameworks that support the work of DRR. A recent Capacity for Disaster

Reduction Initiative (CADRI) Diagnosis (October 2023) found weak coordination mechanisms. Therefore, there is need to re-enforce workable and inclusive coordination systems for managing early warning activities and information for efficient and effective preparedness and response to disaster.

The Disaster Management Act (2010) is the overarching legal framework for DRR in Zambia, which provides for the maintenance and operation of a system for the anticipation, preparedness, prevention, coordination, mitigation, and management of disaster situations. The Act is supported by the National Disaster Management Policy that is well aligned to the regional, national, and global instruments dealing with disaster risk management (DRM). Sector Ministries have legal instruments and policies that provide guidance to their work, including those in relation to DRR and climate change. The 8NDP identifies key constraints in disaster and climate risk preparedness, prevention, response and recovery, and actions to address them. However, legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction are weak in the social sectors. Currently, most of the country's DRR legislation and policies are under review. Although this can allow for good alignment of the policies and legislative instruments, it can create a gap of uncertainty if the revision processes are prolonged.

The existence of early warning systems in sectors is a positive development; however, there is need to harmonise, integrate, and promote active involvement in a broad-based Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. The country has some functional surveillance and monitoring mechanisms for disease and pest situations for humans, crops, fish, and livestock to inform decisions on preventive and control measures.

The UN in Zambia continues to provide strategic response and support towards national recovery and resilient programmes⁴ that have been implemented

4 To mitigate the effects of floods, droughts, epidemics (including cholera, COVID-19), agricultural disasters, pests, and diseases.





in various sectors across the country. These include strengthened socio-economic resilience of vulnerable communities through climate-smart agriculture, alternative livelihoods, financial literacy, women and youth empowerment, and digital technology adoption in community innovations. During 2022-2023, the UN system further provided technical and financial support to the DMMU to conduct a multi-sectoral rapid assessment in the affected districts. Furthermore, the UN supported the Government’s response efforts by providing in-kind food assistance and Cash-based Transfers reaching over 55,000 people in six districts.

Between 2019 and 2023, under the Promoting Human Security Through Sustainable Resettlement in Zambia Project, the UN provided financial support amounting to USD 2,132,065 towards improvement of livelihoods for local communities, refugees, former refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons (IDPs)⁵. The UN has also played an essential role in supporting the creation of an enabling protection and solutions environment to advance the rights of forcibly displaced persons, refugees, migrants, and other vulnerable people on the move, including victims of trafficking⁶.

The country continues to deal with the repercussions of the protracted refugee population and inflows of migrants from neighbouring countries and from the East and Horn of Africa. In 2023, Zambia was home to more than 92,000 refugees⁷ (UNHCR report 2023). Country solutions to the SADC refugee and migration situation lie in addressing drivers that lead to displacements in the region through conflict prevention and peace-building via the country’s diplomatic channels as well as

engagements through the regional bodies (SADC, African Union (AU)).

Additionally, the UN has and continues to support the Government with the development of multiple guidelines, frameworks, and policies which guide the national management and response to support these vulnerable groups⁸. In recent years, with support from the UN, the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants was developed and the Anti-Human Trafficking Department was established within the Department of Immigration. Further support for improved financial literacy, market linkages and capacity building for skills development especially for youth and women groups has been provided in the resettlement schemes for former refugees, migrants, and the host community members. The UN continues to provide essential support in the implementation of Zambia’s Local Integration Framework, which has been providing formal resettlement for over 14,000 former refugees. Decent housing units were also provided for service providers at schools, clinics, and agriculture camps, achieved with partnership from the Office of the Vice-President’s Department of Resettlement.

In addition, the UN has supported the discourse on the improved provision of legal documentation for former refugees to enhance their inclusion in national programmes. Further, through the provision of access roads and crossing points, easy access to services such as schools, clinics, water points, and trading markets has been made for all, especially people on the move, children, the elderly, and expectant mothers. With continued investments in interventions that promote improved livelihood, the UN has been a key partner in the delivery of essential humanitarian support for peace, development, and relief in Zambia.

5 These include women/expectant women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and children, through numerous agency support programmes.

6 The support includes the development of policies and strategic frameworks, including the National Refugee Policy (2024) and the National Migration Policy (2022).

7 DRC (64 percent), Angola (15 percent), Burundi (11 percent), Rwanda (5 percent), Somali (4 percent), and others (1 percent).

8 These include the Refugee Act (2017), National Refugee Policy (2023), National Migration Policy (2022), National Labour Migration Strategy (2024-2028), and National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (2022).

2



CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT





Zambia's Vision 2030 focuses on the country's priority of becoming a prosperous middle-income nation through improvement in macroeconomic stability. The Government is committed to achieving the economic and sustainable agenda through its 8NDP which plays a pivotal role in providing guidance in policy formulation. The Plan aligns with the existing frameworks (both international and regional), including the last decade of action towards the realisation of the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want. It also builds on other frameworks such as the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and the COMESA protocols. To achieve the Agenda 2030, the Government has already aligned its 8NDP and the SDGs by 86 percent.

During the period between the 2021 CCA and 2023, the country saw real GDP grow by an average of 8.7 percent which was higher than the Vision 2030 targets of approximately 6 percent. However, in 2022 the World Bank re-classified Zambia to low-income status from lower middle-income due to the deterioration of gross national income per capita. Although the country had been re-classified, the Government remained determined to improve its economy through improvement of macroeconomic fundamentals stability, that would bring about growth and stability of the economy.

To accelerate the implementation of national development agendas, the Government, through the 8NDP, has prioritised its interventions anchored on the following pillars: (i) Economic Transformation and Job Creation; (ii) Human and Social Development; (iii) Environmental Sustainability; and (iv) Good Governance Environment. The strategic development areas of the 8NDP were arrived at through a review of past performance and consultations with stakeholders regarding the persistent development issues across different sectors of the economy, including their causes and key actions required to address them. By implementing the identified actions under the four

strategic development areas, it is expected that the developmental bottlenecks will be addressed to enable the country attain its medium and long-term objectives. Under each strategic development area are identified development outcomes which are short to medium-term results to be attained through the implementation of various strategies and programmes under each strategic development area.

The UN in Zambia is supporting the implementation of the 8NDP through its 2023-2027 UNSDCF. The UNSDCF determines and reflects the UN Zambia's contributions to the country's development agenda. The UNSDCF serves as the partnership framework between the GRZ and the UN System to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union 2063 Agenda, as well as to contribute to Zambia's Vision 2030 and its 8NDP covering the period 2022-2026.

3

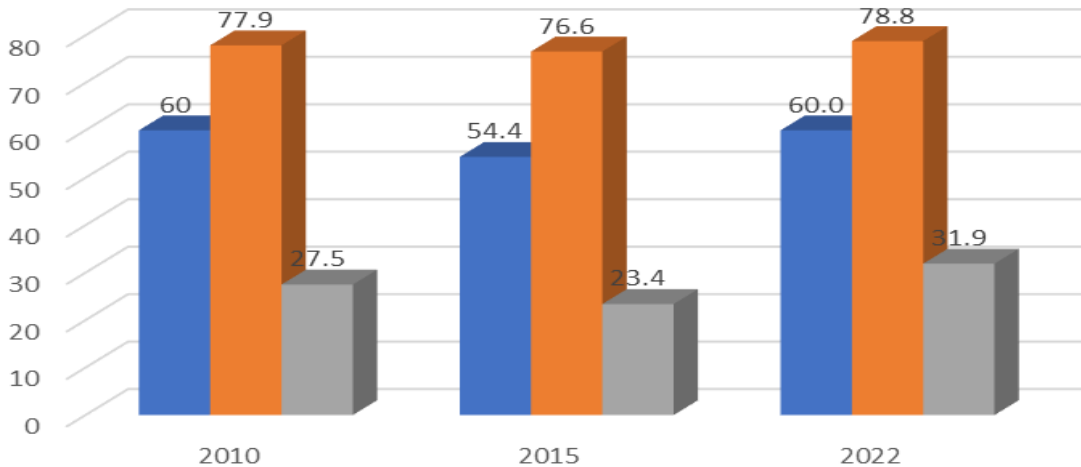


CHAPTER 3: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs AND ITS CHALLENGES





Figure 3: Poverty Trends in Zambia (percent), 2010-2022



Source: ZamStats, 2022 Census of Population and Housing

Significant progress has been made in advancing the SDGs in Africa. However, this progress is uneven, with many developing countries scoring lower than developed countries. Challenges persist in numerous African nations, notably in the areas of education, poverty reduction, and hunger eradication. This calls for quick interventions by all partners to accelerate efforts required to meet the 2030 deadline. The UN is implementing the SDGs through its Cooperation Framework which is divided into four pillars, namely People, Prosperity, Planet, and Peace.

In Zambia, the Government is making concerted efforts to accelerate the SDGs, despite several challenges. Despite the efforts, most of the targets are off-track, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP), 2023).

3.1 PEOPLE PILLAR⁹

3.1.1 SDG 1: End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere

Poverty levels in Zambia are among the highest within the SADC region. Poverty in the country increased from 54.4 percent in 2015 to 60 percent in 2022 (LCMS). In rural areas, overall poverty levels have risen from 76.6 percent to 78.8 percent. This may be attributed to climate shocks and overall declines in agricultural productivity, which is a significant income stream in rural areas. In urban areas, overall poverty also increased from 23.4 percent in 2015 to 31.9 percent in 2022 (see Figure 3), which may be due to the decline of the informal sector and self-employment opportunities for the urban most vulnerable populations. Female-headed households are also more likely to be poorer than their male counterparts as these households disproportionately bear the impact of worsening economic conditions. Child poverty rates show that 65 percent of children experience monetary poverty,

⁹ This Pillar covers the following Goals: SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 6.



while 70.6 percent are deprived in two or more dimensions of well-being simultaneously.

The country's Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality in terms of per capita income, also increased from 0.546 in 2015, to 0.507 in 2022, showing a marginal reduction in inequality. To reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability, Zambia has made considerable efforts to enhance social protection mechanisms against poverty. The 2024 allocations for social protection programmes have seen a significant increase. In nominal terms, the allocation rose by 19 percent from ZMW 8.1 billion in 2023 to ZMW 9.7 billion in 2024. This also represents an increase from 4.9 percent of the total budget in 2023 to 5.4 percent in 2024.

Social protection, including cash transfers, continues to address food insecurity, thereby potentially contributing to reducing malnutrition. As of 2023, social cash transfer targets 1.3 million households. The Government has also recognised that the current value of ZMW 200 per household will need to be reassessed, as it is not adequate to meet nutritional needs given current economic and climate shocks. Looking forward, as part of horizontal expansion of social protection programmes, other vulnerable groups, such as refugees and migrants, need to be included.

In 2024, the nominal allocation for the Food Security Pack (FSP)¹⁰ increased from ZMW 1.2 billion in 2023 to ZMW 1.3 billion, representing a 4.5 percent increase. FSP recipients also increased from 80,000 to 290,000 households, offering essential farming inputs to vulnerable households. FSP is targeted at poor and vulnerable households, using community structures and therefore stands to impact poverty reduction through improving agricultural productivity. This is

¹⁰ The Food Security Pack was introduced in 2000 by the Government, as a social safety net programme, to primarily empower vulnerable but viable farmer households who had lost their productive assets, due to recurrent unfavourable climatic conditions and adverse effects of structural adjustment reforms that reduced their productivity at household level in the 1990s.

particularly pertinent given rising poverty levels in rural areas and failing harvests.

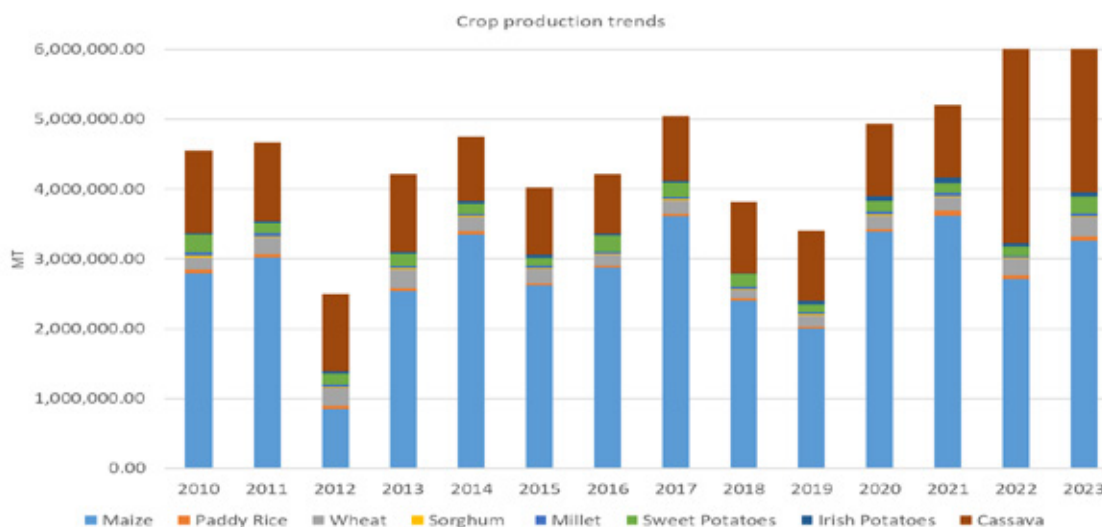
The Government's commitment to decentralisation and local economic growth is evident through the consistent rise in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) allocation to support community development projects. The CDF experienced significant growth, including a 1,500 percent increase in 2022. According to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, CDF absorption increased from 40 percent in 2022 to 56.9 percent by December 2023. Absorption challenges were primarily attributed to protracted and centralised approval processes, as well as understaffing, which contributed to delays in project execution. Reforms in local Government administration are expected to address fiscal challenges and strengthen the capacities of the local authorities.

To enhance the efficiency of the CDF, the Government has decentralised project approval to the Provincial Administration from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development Headquarters. The latest Decentralisation Policy, alongside its Detailed Implementation Plan, brings fresh attention and momentum to the execution of decentralisation. This policy involves the delegation of powers and exclusive functions from the central Government to the local Government.

3.1.2 *SDG 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture*

Zambia's malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world. Over 1.35 million Zambians are experiencing severe food insecurity due to high food prices and climatic shocks. This population requires urgent humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihoods, and prevent acute malnutrition. Agriculture is the primary activity that produces food and the main source of livelihood for most of the country's population. Maize is the main



Figure 4: Production Trends of Cereals and Tubers


Source: FAO, Zambia Country Analysis of ZamStats Data

staple and the most widely cultivated crop. However, the quantity of maize produced per year has stalled over the last decade, relative to population growth, such that supply has not been able to meet the growing demand arising from a fast-growing population. Figure 4 shows the country's production trends of cereals and tubers.

To address the low levels of production and productivity in crop production, the Government with technical support from the UN and other partners, in 2024 launched the National Agriculture Mechanisation Strategy (NAMS), 2024-2028 to create an enabling environment for the sustainable development of agricultural mechanisation that considers socio-economic conditions of key stakeholders while ensuring environmental sustainability of agricultural activities. The NAMS was launched together with the 'Mechanise 360 Ulimi Okwana', which is a smallholder farmer's mechanisation promotion campaign with a target to mechanise 500,000 hectares of smallholder farmers' land by 2027.

Zambia has been recording increased growth in livestock production, according to the 2022

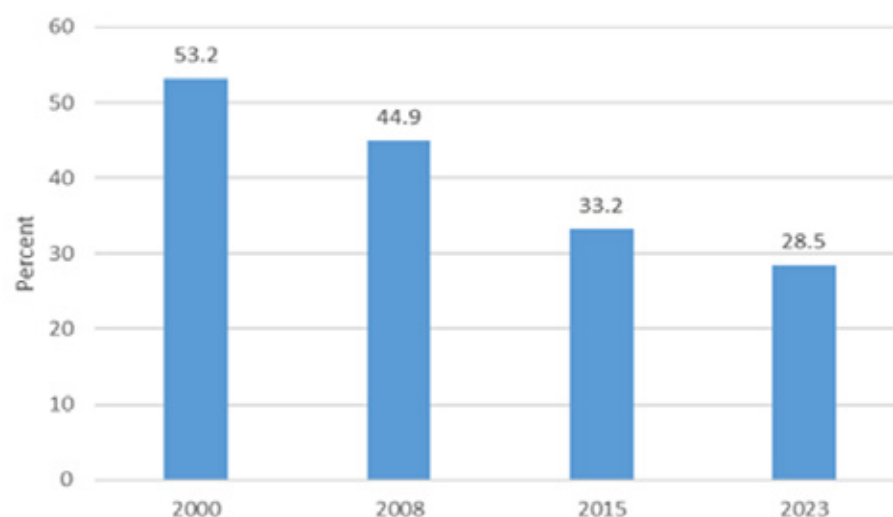
Livestock Survey (Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and ZamStats, 2022). As such, livestock remains key to livelihood, food security and nutrition, and social status. For most of the rural population, livestock is an important source of income and animal draught power. Currently, the sub-sector contributes 3.2 percent to the national GDP and 42 percent to the agriculture GDP, and has the potential to deliver both agricultural-led growth and socio-economic transformation as aspired by the 8NDP and the Vision 2030. The demand for livestock and livestock products has remained sustainably high due to the steady population growth while the regional and international markets are also unmet.

The country has made little progress in reducing the prevalence of hunger¹¹ over the past years, and therefore remains unlikely to achieve SDG 2. According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI), Zambia has a score of 28.5, a slight improvement from the 33.2 reported in 2022. With a score of 28.5, Zambia's level of hunger is classified as serious. The country is ranked 110th out of 125 countries reported

¹¹ Defined as calorie consumption of less than 1,800 kilocalories per day.



Figure 5: Zambia – Hunger Prevalence



Source: 2023 GHI Report

in the 2023 GHI report, indicating that it is among the 25 hungriest countries in the world. Figure 5 shows the trend in Zambia's hunger index.

In the 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report, Zambia indicates 29.8 percent prevalence of undernourishment in the population, representing one-third of the population not meeting the minimum caloric intake¹². The report indicates marginal reduction from the 30.1 percent reported in 2022. Acute malnutrition measured by child wasting is estimated at 5 percent while 35 percent of the children below the age of five have stunted growth (2018 ZDHS). An estimated 9 percent of children has a low birth weight of less than 2.5 kilogrammes.

Another important indicator of food security in Zambia is the 2023 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). The report showed that an estimated 1.59 million people, representing 17 percent of the population in Zambia, was classified being in crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse between the months of August and September 2023. This number

was projected to increase to 2.04 million during the lean season from October 2023 to March 2024, and further expected to increase post the lean season because of below average rains forecast for the 2023/24 season. This population will require urgent humanitarian food assistance to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihoods as well as prevent acute malnutrition. The situation was primarily driven by climate-related shocks and hazards experienced in the country such as prolonged dry spells, pests, diseases, high prices of inputs and food, mainly due to exogenous shocks. Other factors driving the vulnerability of the population to food insecurity include poverty and macroeconomic instability.

To reduce food insecurity and accelerate the achievement of SDG 2, Zambia has developed a food systems transformation strategic document with five pathways designed in line with the Global Food Systems Action Tracks: (i) ensuring access to safe and nutritious foods for all; (ii) shifting to healthy and sustainable consumption patterns; (iii) boosting nature-positive food production; (iv) advancing equitable livelihoods of people involved in the food system; and (v) building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses.

¹² According to FAO, undernourishment is the deprivation of food with calorie consumption of less than 1,800 kilocalories per day.





3.1.3 *SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages*

Zambia has a well-developed private and public healthcare system. However, access to basic health services between provinces and between urban and rural areas remains inequitable. In urban areas, 99 percent of households are within 5 kilometres of a health facility compared to 50 percent in rural areas. The health sector is governed by the National Health Policy principle of “equity of access to assured quality, cost-effective and affordable health services, as close to the family as possible” (GRZ, 2012). Healthcare services are provided by the Government, FBOs, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. In 2022, Government and donor contributions accounted for approximately 41 percent and 42 percent, respectively of the estimated USD 59 current health expenditure per capita (Ministry of Health, 2022).

Zambia is in the process of strengthening its health system to progress towards universal health coverage (UHC), which is at the top of the global health policy agenda and has been adopted as part of the SDGs, under the Health Financing Strategy for 2017 to 2027. The country’s work on UHC is fully aligned with SDG target 3.8 which focuses on achieving UHC, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health services, and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccination for all, health promotion, and disease prevention. The average essential services coverage index based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious and non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access was 56 percent in 2021 (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2023). Only 0.3 percent of the population in Zambia faces catastrophic health spending at the threshold of greater than 10 percent of household expenditure for health.

As a share of total household health expenditure, spending on drugs was the highest category at over

42 percent followed by transport and food at 26 percent. According to the National AIDS Spending Assessment report (2022), 92.3 percent of the HIV response in Zambia is externally-supported. The United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief continues to be the largest contributor to the HIV response, followed by the Global Fund.

The Global Health Security agenda cannot be achieved without full inclusion of all populations, including migrants. It is critical to understand that migration is a social determinant of health and has a bearing on UHC achievement. In an effort to leave no one behind, Zambia has developed a health benefit package that is now under the health insurance scheme and from which a set of basic service delivery tracer indicators are monitored. A recent review of national policies and legislation showed that the main challenges to progressing towards UHC come from persistent barriers in accessing health services, including economic, geographic, epidemiological, cultural, and inequitable provision of health services.

Zambia has committed to progressively break down the above barriers and expand access to comprehensive health services to meet the needs of all people, including migrants, refugees and IDPs (Vision 2030). The provisions of outreach services for immunisation, nutrition, and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health were critically limited before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exposed these health system’s insufficiencies and disrupted delivery of services. To ensure good health and well-being for all, strategic mobilisation of resources and prioritisation of all health problems will still be critical for Zambia. In addition, human resource constraints remain a challenge in the provision and access to quality health services in the country. Zambia will need to almost double the number of its human workforce from the current 42,630 to 80,274 by training and recruiting an additional 37,644 staff by 2025 if it is to satisfactorily serve its large population of 19.6 million people.



Zambia is faced with both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Communicable diseases include HIV, tuberculosis, sexually-transmitted diseases and malaria which are the leading causes of ill-health and mortality. Annual incidence of HIV among adults aged 15 years and above in Zambia is 0.31 percent, corresponding to approximately 28,000 new infections (ZAMPHIA, 2023).

For children aged 0-14 years, annual new infections reduced from 8,600 in 2010 to 5,000 in 2023. HIV incidence is 0.56 percent among adult women and 0.06 percent among adult men. Prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15 years and above in Zambia is approximately 11.0 percent. HIV prevalence is markedly higher among women than men in each of the age groups 20-24 years through 35-39 years and among 45-49 years (ZAMPHIA, 2021). Among the 10 provinces in Zambia, Lusaka had the highest prevalence rate at 14.4 percent while the Northern Province had the lowest at 5.8 percent. The country has made progress in rolling out the antiretroviral therapy (ART) programme. It is estimated that by 2023, Zambia had 1.3 million people living with HIV out of which 1.2 million were enrolled on ART.

Mental health is a critical but often neglected aspect of public health. The healthcare system's inadequate focus on mental health issues has particularly stark consequences for the youth, who are navigating critical developmental stages. The limited access to mental health services, exacerbated by a shortage of accurate data, professionals and care facilities, is further impeded by stigma and cultural barriers, presenting even greater challenges for girls and young women due to gender-based discrimination.

Malaria is endemic throughout Zambia and is the country's largest public health problem with an increasing malaria incidence from 313 cases per 1,000 population in 2022 to 402 cases per 1,000 population in 2023 (Health Management Information System, 2022, 2023). To address this, the country has developed a National Malaria Strategic Plan,

2022-2026 which outlines the targeted deployment of key high impact interventions guided through sub-national tailored approaches. Additionally, Zambia has increased its partnership base and advocacy to mobilise domestic and external resources to address the high burden of malaria.

The country is also experiencing increasing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, injuries, mental health, and underlying social determinants. Non-communicable diseases constitute at least 23 percent of total deaths, with CVDs at 8 percent, cancer 4 percent and other NCDs, 9 percent. In 2019, Zambia reported 20.5 deaths per 100,000 population mortality rate due to road traffic accident injuries. Neglected tropical diseases, such as soil-transmitted helminths, schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis and blinding trachoma also contribute to ill-health.

3.1.4 *SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All*

Zambia's Vision 2030 places emphasis on education and skills development with specific focus on improving technical, vocational and entrepreneurship skills that respond to market needs. There has been a notable surge in school enrolment, largely attributed to the implementation of the Education for All and the Free Education policies over the past few years which eliminate school fees at the early childhood, primary and secondary levels.

The introduction of the Education for All policy from early childhood education to Grade 12 has seen more than 2 million students returning to school. Increased access to education (from 2021 to 2023) by 34 percent across the 10 provinces of the country has been recorded, including a 24 percent increase between 2022 and 2023 from 258,616 to 321,486. The above policies ensure access to quality education for all children. One of the key strategies in the Education for All policy is the Home-Grown





School Feeding Programme, which provides free meals to students, designed to address barriers to education, such as hunger and malnutrition, thereby incentivising school attendance and reducing dropout rates. It is important to strengthen overall food security in rural areas to avoid a zero-sum effect where there is feeding in school but no food for students at home (Ministry of Education, 2023).

In alignment with its policies, the Government has prioritised increased investment in education infrastructure and human resources over the past two years to accommodate the growing student population. A total of ZMW 338.3 million has been allocated for the continued construction of schools, with plans to build 202 secondary schools (UN Children’s Fund, 2023b). This allocation indicates a strong focus on expanding secondary school educational infrastructure to accommodate more students. The strategic investment in secondary education is crucial for meeting the growing demand for higher levels of education and ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students. There has been a significant focus on

teacher recruitment: 30,496 in 2022 and 4,500 in 2023, which has contributed to improved quality of learning in schools. This influx of new teachers is expected to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio, thereby allowing for more personalised instruction and support for students.

The Government increased the education budget from 13.9 percent of GDP in 2023 to 15.4 percent in 2024, from ZMW 23.2 billion to ZMW 27.4 billion, respectively. This funding supports various initiatives, including school infrastructure development, equipment for technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training (TEVET) institutions, and provision of school grants and bursaries. Investment in early childhood education (ECE) has also increased as the country has made substantial progress with the establishment of the ECE Directorate in 2015, which has produced an ECE policy (2017-2030). While many schools appreciated the early release of school grants, about 40 percent of them (including special schools and mainstream schools with special units) reported that the funds were inadequate when compared to the needs of the schools.



In absolute terms, of the 580,000 students added in 2022, 266,000 were boys while 314,000 were girls. However, the teacher-pupil ratio remains high at 1:58, hence the need to progressively employ more teachers trained at pre-service and continue implementing continuous professional development for in-service teachers. Another notable challenge is the slowed enforcement of the Education Act amendment of 2011 and the Persons with Disability Act of 2012, with the latter requiring statutory instruments to operationalise it. Since 2022, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the new curriculum for inclusive education pre-service teacher training in more than 23 public institutions.

In 2013, the Government through the Ministry of Education developed the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Framework, now referred to as Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE), to enhance the provision of reproductive health education. Between 2021 and 2022, the CSE curriculum underwent further review and the Ministry received submissions incorporating input from stakeholders. In developing the CSE content and framework, the Ministry consulted national stakeholders extensively through various platforms, allowing for the development of age-appropriate content that is relevant to the Zambian context, and is being implemented.

It is concerning that teenage pregnancies continued to increase between 2014 and 2020, with 12,330 primary school girls falling pregnant in 2020 compared to 4,089 girls in secondary school. According to the 2023 Voluntary National Review, in 2022 a minimum of 50 percent of adolescent mothers returned to school. Strengthening implementation of the LSHE Programme could contribute towards addressing factors that contribute to school dropout and gender disparities in education.

3.1.5 SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

Zambia has made progress and put in place measures to ensure that most of the targets for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women are met by 2030. Gender equality is a global prerequisite to achieving the SDGs. However, gender equality remains a challenge because Zambian society is predominantly patriarchal in nature and there are limited and sometimes no opportunities for women to exercise their agency and self-efficacy. According to the 2018 ZDHS, some of the drivers of gender inequities are high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) (46 percent), high rates of child marriage (31.2 percent) and high rates of adolescent pregnancy (29 percent).

In 2023, Zambia's Gender Inequality Index (GII) was at 0.526 ranking it at 137 out of 170 countries (UN Development Programme (UNDP), 2024). The GII is a measure of gender inequality in three key dimensions (reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market). The gender inequalities are a result of the deep-rooted cultural and traditional practices that favour men more than women. GII is greatly observed in informal cross-border trade and accounts for between 30 to 40 percent of the total trade within the SADC, with an estimated value of USD 17.6 billion. Women make up approximately 70 percent of informal traders. They face gender-specific risks and are more susceptible to harassment, abuse and exploitation. In Zambia, the labour force participation rate among females was 52.1 percent and among males it was 67.3 percent in 2023.

There has been some improvement in the meaningful participation of women in governance and leadership in both public and private sectors; however, more still needs to be done to ensure gender parity at all levels. Although Zambia has the first female Speaker in the National Assembly, the proportion of female Members of Parliament is still low compared to males. The percentage of women





holding parliamentary seats is 15.6 percent against 84.4 percent for men, hence the need for collective effort to ensure increased women’s participation in political processes at all levels.

From 2010 to 2023, the Government, with support from the UN, has implemented policy reforms aimed at addressing gender issues. In 2023 the Gender Theme Group of the UN supported the Government in the finalisation and approval of the National Gender Policy, consolidation of the Periodic State Party Reports for the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and initiating the development of the National Action Plan for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The Gender Equity and Equality Act (2015) provides the overall framework for how gender equality should be promoted in public and private organisations. The Act obliges public and private bodies to develop gender action plans and special measures to achieve 50 percent representation of women. The Amended Constitution of 2016 further emphasises 50 percent representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions. The Anti-Gender-based Violence Act (2011) has progressive provisions meant to protect women and children. However, complete enforcement and implementation of these statutes is still required.

To foster accountability, the UN, through the Gender Scorecard, has achieved improvements across several indicators. This is a step towards ensuring gender equality is achieved in the UN system not only through gender disaggregation among staff but also through how policies and programmes are designed and implemented. Further, support to the Government is provided with a gender lens, especially for most of the GRZ-UN joint programmes. Despite these reforms and achievements, more work is needed for the country to dismantle and deconstruct the patriarchal society and interrogate negative social and gender norms.

The Government has made advancement in amending the Marriages Act (2023). The legislation has raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, including that of customary marriages. The Act has adopted the Zambian Constitution’s definition of the term “child” as “a person who has attained, or is below, the age of eighteen years”. Significantly, the restriction of marriages has been extended to those consummated under customary rites, where there were no marriageable age limits, resulting in more children being married off. The Government also enacted the Children’s Code Act (2022) that promotes and protects the rights of the child. Under Section 18 of this Act, children are protected from female genital mutilation and child marriages.

The 2023 GBV report by the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Zambia Police Service showed that GBV disproportionately affected girls and women. Approximately 42,965 cases were recorded country-wide in 2023, an increase from 33,536 in 2022. Out of the 42,965 cases recorded, 24,989 were women, 7,574 were men and 10,402 were children. A total of 137 were murder cases, an increase from 103 murder cases in 2022¹³. There is an annual increase in reported GBV cases which can be attributed to increased awareness of availability of post-GBV services.

The UN and the Government are implementing a Joint Programme on GBV Phase II which is contributing to strengthening GBV prevention and response systems. The UN has also supported the Government with the refurbishment of Places of Safety, to ensure provision of minimum standards of care for the protection of victims of trafficking and other vulnerable persons. The Government is also considering gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that the needs and aspirations of men and women, and boys and girls are addressed during the budget preparation processes.

13 The higher number of murder victims were females, 80 (68 women; 12 girls) and 57 males (37 men; 20 boys).



3.1.6 *SDG 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All*

The Government is committed to universal access to clean and safe water and proper sanitation, aligning with SDG 6 and the 8NDP. The Government aims to enhance access to water through infrastructure development, including drilling of boreholes, and constructing and rehabilitating dams. Additionally, efforts have focused on coordinating programmes for transboundary water resources to ensure sustainable utilisation for Zambia's socio-economic development. In addition, the Government has prioritised plans to improve water resource management and security by developing rainwater harvesting facilities. Notable plans include construction of dams across the country. The implementation of the 8NDP, the Zambia Water Investment Programme (ZWIP) and other policies on water is expected to lead to an increase in access to clean and safe water to 67 percent by 2026 from 58 percent in 2018 for rural areas, and 98 percent by 2026 from 91.8 percent for urban areas during the same period.

Zambia has formulated and implemented policies, programmes and strategies including the National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy and the ZWIP, to improve access to sufficient and quality water and sanitation services. The policies, programmes and strategies are focused on ensuring national water security and sustainable management and utilisation of Zambia's water resources for socio-economic development, addressing water governance issues, building institutional capacity for addressing water security challenges, mobilising an ambitious level of resources for implementation of policy measures, and promoting climate resilience and gender transformation.

However, the allocation for water and sanitation in the 2024 budget reflects a concerning trend. The sector experienced a notable reduction, with



funding decreasing from ZMW 2.3 billion in 2023 to ZMW 1.9 billion in the current budget. This downward trajectory has been consistent since 2020, when the sector's share was 2.5 percent. Over the years, this share has steadily declined, reaching a mere 1.1 percent in 2024.

The decline raises critical concerns about the sector's ability to address pressing water and sanitation issues faced by communities, including recurrent cholera outbreaks. Despite the reduced budgetary allocation, the sector has made notable strides and over 60,000 households were connected to improved water facilities in 2023 with a further 280,000 earmarked for 2024. The sector relies heavily on external financing. In the 2024 national budget, 86 percent of the water and sanitation budget has been sourced from external funding.

To improve sanitation services across the country, the Government is strengthening sewerage and solid waste management by increasing financing to address these challenges. With these interventions, the proportion of households with access to improved sanitation is expected to increase to 55 percent and 90 percent in 2026 from 37.2 percent and 77.7 percent in 2018 in rural and urban areas,



respectively. Efforts are being made in all local authorities to set up rural water and sanitation units that are responsible for provision of clean drinking water and promotion of adequate and affordable sanitation, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities, that are not serviced by water utility companies¹⁴.

Increased and sustained access to clean water and adequate sanitation is attributed to strong community participation, with communities participating in such structures as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Committees and interventions such as the Community-Led Total Sanitation. Some rural districts (especially newly-created ones) lack accurate and reliable data on access to clean water and sanitation and this makes tracking progress difficult. In 2020, the proportion of schools with access to basic water and sanitation facilities increased by 0.15 percent over the 95.9 percent status in 2019. However, only 35.4 percent of schools provided sanitary towels to girls in 'emergency' situations in 2020, a slight improvement from 2019 at 32.5 percent. This marginal improvement shows that more effort is required to provide sanitary towels for girls to stay in school during menstruation.

Zambia is strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for environmental sustainability. The Government is reviewing various policies, including the National Policy on Climate Change, the National Policy on Environment, and the National Biosafety Policy, among others, to incorporate emerging issues and strengthen aspects on green growth. In addition, advanced progress has been achieved in the formulation of legislation on climate change to strengthen the coordination framework and enhance coherence between mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and review of the Environmental Management Act which incorporates green growth aspects.

¹⁴ The majority of which are town councils, followed by municipalities.

Further, green economy and climate change are mainstreamed in the 8NDP with a dedicated pillar on environmental sustainability. In 2021, to fulfil the country's commitment to the Paris Agreement, Zambia submitted a more ambitious revised and updated Nationally-determined Contribution (NDC). This was done by enhancing both mitigation and adaptation actions with the target to achieve an estimated total emission reduction of 38,000 greenhouse gas carbon dioxide equivalent. The adaptation component was elaborated by developing indicators to enable the country to track progress on building resilience in both human and physical ecosystems and in adaptation actions.

Zambia also formulated the 2023 NAP which identified the country's major medium and long-term climate risks and vulnerabilities and mainstreamed them into the national development planning and budgeting processes. The NAP set out priority adaptation actions, thereby directing investments into the building of the resilience of communities across the country to the adverse impacts of climate change.

In response to the Presidential Declaration, the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation and its partners have developed a WASH drought response and early recovery plan. The plan covers responses of the Water Development and Management sub-sector and the Water Supply and Sanitation sub-sector which are critical for the development and management of water resources, provision of clean water supply and adequate sanitation for all during drought. The sector plans to undertake activities such as drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes, conducting training of 1,760 WASH committees, provision of WASH kits and spare parts, construction of 110 new commercial boreholes for 5 water utilities, construction of water points for wild animals, and installation of standby water pumping systems, among others as part of the drought response.



3.2 PROSPERITY PILLAR¹⁵

3.2.1 *SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All*

The Vision 2030 economic blueprint provides the vision for the energy sector to achieve “Universal access to clean, reliable and affordable energy at the lowest total economic, financial, social and environmental cost consistent with national development goals by 2030”. The current energy agenda in Zambia is focused on diversifying the nation’s energy sector and ensuring equitable access to clean and renewable energy sources for all populations in the country. In 2022, the Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan were launched to ensure systematic investment into the renewable energy market. Furthermore, the Ministry of Energy (MoE) working in collaboration with the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment (MoGEE) endorsed the Zambia Renewable Energy Financing Framework which is expected to catalyse private investment in the renewable energy sub-sector, thereby accelerating the achievement of electricity generation and diversification targets. The country is heavily reliant on hydroelectricity; however, efforts are needed to diversify, given the effects of climate change.

Zambia is making progress in terms of renewable energy. For instance, the country has received a 430-megawatt (MW) boost from a flagship project, which was a result of a 2021 agreement between Chariot and Total Energy to collaboratively find and develop wind and solar projects for mining customers. In addition to this, under a project named Alternatives to Charcoal, primarily focusing on urban and peri-urban regions, the Government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) collaborated to lower the energy consumption of charcoal and increase the use of alternative



technologies and/or fuels. This was done in a bid to reduce reliance on fossil fuels for electricity.

The Electricity Service Access Project which commenced in 2018, funded by the World Bank, has also helped in improving access to electricity by connecting 40,346 households as of January 2022, which comprised 40,027 having their gender title input and 319 unnamed. This contributed to a slight improvement in access to electricity in both rural and urban areas from 13.97 percent in 2020 to 14.5 percent in 2021 for rural areas, and from 82.6 percent in 2020 to 85.7 percent in 2021 for urban areas. In reducing market barriers and providing an incentive for growth in investment towards electricity projects, the Off-Grid Taskforce Initiative was developed¹⁶. In 2021, the project attracted USD 10.6 million in international financing to support clean energy research and development and renewable energy production.

The 2019-2025 ElectriFi Project, which is funded by the European Union (EU), aims to promote

¹⁶ Partners include the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, Swedish Embassy, Department for International Development (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office), African Development Bank, and USAID; the project also brings together representatives of several stakeholders.

¹⁵ This Pillar covers the following Goals: SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, and SDG 10.





efforts in the private sector for reasonably priced, dependable, and sustainable energy solutions. This is aimed at improving the country's investment portfolio towards clean energy which stood at USD 12.99 million in 2020. The Scaling up Renewable Energy Programme (2018-2020), aimed at assisting the expansion of access to power of up to 100 MW of renewable energy capacity from all sources, was another financing window of the Strategic Climate Fund that operated under the Climate Investment Funds. This was implemented to improve rural access to clean fuels and technology for cooking, which has been low and reduced from 2.3 percent in 2019 to 2.2 percent in 2021.

The Government through the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) with funding from the CDF is increasing universal access to electricity. This is done through entering into partnerships with municipalities to provide electricity to rural communities for the purpose of connecting public places to socio-economic import, to enhance productivity in the agriculture, tourism, fisheries and other economic sectors under the Priority Rural Electrification projects. As of December 2023, the REA had entered 73 partnerships with local councils with an additional 68 partnerships planned for 2024.

To facilitate the growth of private sector investments, the Government established the Office for Promoting Private Power Investment (OPPI), housed in the MoE, to assist in project development to address the limited capacity in the private sector. The unit provides capacity services; transactional advice to support feasibility studies; regulatory compliance; technical design and evaluation; procurement; preparation of business plans; financial and economic modelling; market and risk assessment; and financial closure. By the end of 2023, the OPPI had supported studies for a combined capacity in excess of 2,000 MW, with some of the projects currently at the stage of Power Purchase Agreement negotiations.

Despite the Government's efforts to achieve

universal access to clean and affordable energy for all its citizens, several challenges exist. To address these challenges, the Government has developed policies and strategies¹⁷ with the purpose of increasing exploitation of renewable energy to diversify the energy mix to meet the growing demand in the country. The National Electrification Strategy and the Rural Electrification Master Plan provide specific electrification targets and the detailed roadmaps to achieve electrification targets for 2030.

In 2021, the Government initiated the development of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) which outlines a strategy for developing the nation's energy sector over the next 30 years. A major goal of the IRP is to achieve universal access to clean, reliable and affordable energy for all Zambians. The IRP, which was launched in 2024, provides a structured plan for generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure in Zambia for the next 30 years while accounting for security of supply and environmental protection. The project, led by the MoE, intends to implement a strong energy planning system and the creation of a 30-year IRP, which will address the limitations in Zambia's energy sector.

In 2021, 10.2 percent of the population had access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking, slightly lower than the 10.9 percent in 2020. Access to electricity in Zambia improved marginally from 44.6 percent in 2021 to 46.7 percent in 2022 on account of the impact of the rural electrification programme and access to solar panels. Through the REA, the MoE with support from the World Bank, has been carrying out the Electricity Service Access Project. The project commenced in 2018 and targeted increasing access to electricity in rural communities. The aim is to expand access to on-grid power by supporting on-grid connections in rural regions using methods covered by the connection fee subsidy programme, identifying, scoping and extension of off-grid and

17 Policies include the National Energy Policy (2019) and the MoE Strategic Plan (2018-2021).



supporting project execution, and capacity building through technical assistance, funded through the project.

3.2.2 *SDG 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All*

The Government remains committed to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including migrant workers, young people, and PWDs, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value. The size of the labour force grew by approximately 15 percent, from 3.2 million to 3.7 million while the employed population rose from 2.9 million to 3.2 million between 2018 and 2022 (ZamStats, 2023). Between 2020 and 2022, the percentage of working age persons absent from the labour force due to family responsibilities dropped from 20.4 percent to 15.8 percent but increased slightly for those unable to participate due to disabilities from 2.1 percent to 2.7 percent. While growth in the labour force and the number of employed people in the past 5 years could signal progressive developments in the economy, many jobs do not actually meet decent work¹⁸ conditions, as over 70 percent of the working population is found in the informal economy.

Promotion of sustainable and inclusive growth is necessary for poverty reduction by allowing citizens to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Zambia has not grown its economy sufficiently to attain SDG 8. Poverty has continued to rise with more people falling into poverty than those coming out. As per the Labour Force Survey of 2022, the

¹⁸ According to the International Labour Organisation, decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

working poverty was rated to be at 56.1 percent. This is driven by many factors, among them low levels of productivity, especially in sectors such as agriculture where the majority of people work. Many factors account for these trends, including low levels of education, lack of skills, and inadequate training for many economically-productive persons.

To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth the Government is supporting private sector growth, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which, although mostly informal employ over 85 percent of Zambian labour. The Government has launched the 2023-2026 MSME Strategic Plan as well as the Revised MSME Development Policy. Furthermore, the Government has enacted several policies towards anchoring structural transformation. For instance, the country has invested in securing favourable policy and legislative frameworks¹⁹. An Entrepreneurship Development Strategy for Technical Education has been developed and launched recently with the goal of creating a 'pool of innovative, productive, and competitive MSMEs'.

In addition, the National Mineral Resources Development Policy of 2022 is being implemented with a focus on creating a "A Smart, Sustainable, Diversified and Growth Centred Mining Sector". This includes the efforts underway to establish the Minerals Regulation Commission and to formalise the artisanal and small-scale mining sub-sector. Furthermore, the country is positioning itself to harness the potential benefits from the current emerging context of a source of critical raw materials to support the green transition.

¹⁹ These include: Skills Development Levy Act; Industrial and Labour Relations Act; Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Employment Code Act; National Child Labour Policy; National Action Plan for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour; National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants; Anti-Human Trafficking Act; National Employment and Labour Market Policy; National Child Policy; Child Welfare Policy; Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Policy; Occupational Safety and Health Policy; Social Protection Policy; National Policy on Disability; National Labour Migration Strategy; and National Volunteer Policy.





The Government has also launched the National Youth Policy and has embarked on various youth empowerment initiatives such as the Internship, Volunteerism, Apprenticeship and Graduate Programme to accelerate employment opportunities. This is done through UN agencies and the public sector across the country, youth skills training programmes, youth entrepreneurship schemes, support for youth-led businesses and skills training bursaries using the CDF. This intervention by the Government has resulted into an increase in TVET student enrolments from approximately 38,500 in 2021 to more 95,800 students in 2023, with approximately 50 percent of them being females.

Furthermore, through a Presidential directive, 314 permanent jobs were created in the health sector for the youth who served as volunteers during the 2023 to 2024 cholera pandemic. In 2022 Government launched the National Volunteer Policy (NVP) which has created a policy environment that is meant to promote volunteerism in the country and set the tone for positive volunteer participation and contribution to national development by defining voluntary services, standards and policy direction on

Volunteerism. The NVP framework is meant to guide the various partners and organisations working with volunteers. Empowered by this enabling environment, the work of national and international Volunteer Involving Organizations (VIOs) in Zambia is expected to become more structured than before to enable the country capture volunteer contributions to national development and SDGs as envisaged in the NVP's Vision of "a Zambia which fully embraces a culture of volunteerism in national development."

The Government is committed to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and end child labour in all its forms. With the support of the UN, to fully harness the development potential of labour migrants, the Government has developed a Labour Migration Strategy (2023). Additionally, the Government has developed and is already implementing a National Diaspora Policy (2019) intending to harness the diaspora's human, social and financial capital.



3.2.3 *SDG 9: Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation and Foster Innovation*

The country's efforts in promoting inclusive industrialisation have slowed down recently as data from the UN Department on Economic and Social Affairs shows that manufacturing value-added as a proportion of GDP declined from 9.2 percent in 2000 to 7.9 percent in 2022. However, the value of manufacturing per capita at constant 2015 prices increased from USD 73.5 in 2000 to USD 98.3 in 2022. This progress has partly been attributed to several measures the nation has taken and implemented to foster growth in its industrial sector, which include the National Aquaculture Trade Development Strategy (2020-2024); the National Investment Promotional Strategy (2018-2022); the National Local Content Strategy (2018-2022); the National Standards Strategy (2020-2022); the National Strategy on Elimination of Non-tariff Barriers (2018-2022); the Zambia African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) National Strategy and Implementation Plan; the Zambia Export Diversification Strategy for Gold and Gemstones (2020-2025); National Volunteer Policy; and the Zambia Leather Value Chain Strategy (2016-2025).

In addition, in 2020, COMESA and Zambia signed a Sub-delegation Agreement, to execute coordinated border control and trade facilitation efforts at Chirundu, Nakonde, and Mwami border posts as part of the procedures to carry out the 11th European Development Fund Trade Facilitation Programme, which focuses on initiatives that have been identified as critical to raising Zambia's trade and trade facilitation profile. Under the Sub-delegation Agreement, Zambia is carrying out the Euro 6.8 million Zambia Border Posts Upgrading Project. This project is a component of the larger Aid for Trade agenda and supports the upgrading of priority border infrastructure at three border posts.

Furthermore, Zambia signed the agreement establishing the AfCFTA in 2019. This is in a bid to

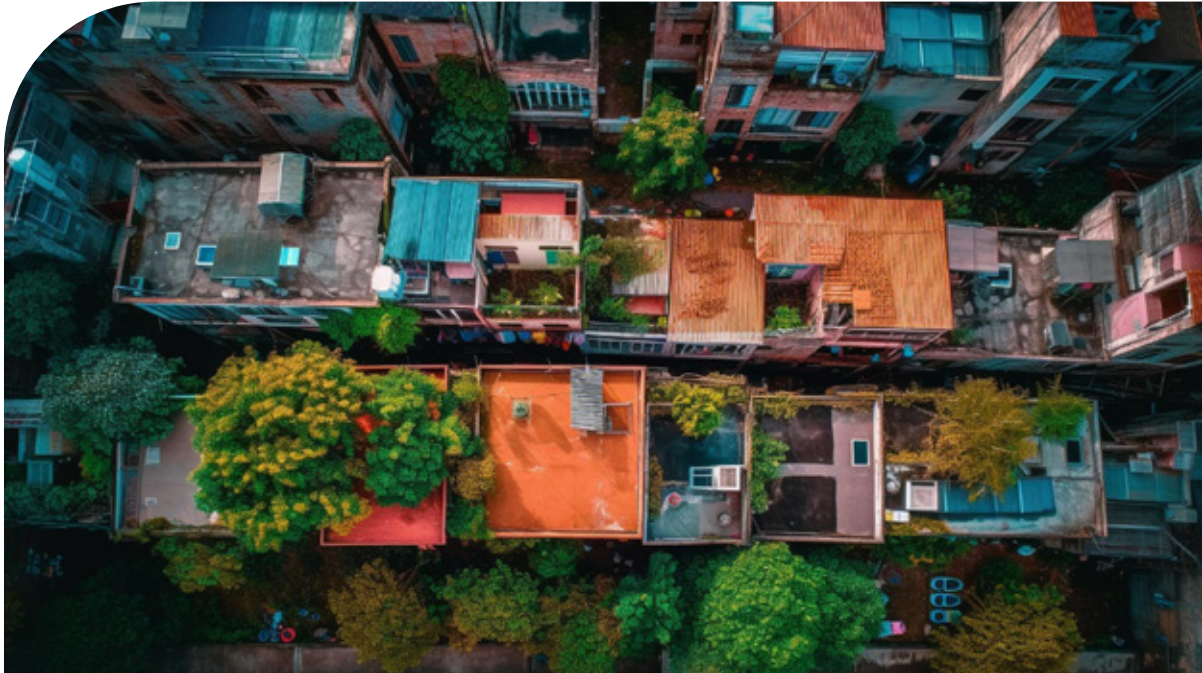
diversify and increase its range of export products, export markets, and increase the number of service suppliers exporting to international markets as the economy is premised on industrialisation and export-led growth. With support by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the country has set out the national strategy for implementation of the agreement establishing the AfCFTA to conduct the first window of the sensitisation and awareness campaign in 2024.

SMEs are key in promoting industrialisation and value chains as a vital instrument to enhance growth and propel economic development. The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry with assistance from the World Bank implemented the Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Project in 2017, to enhance the technical and production capabilities of SMEs in the agribusiness sector. The Government further launched an innovative curriculum of Trade Policy and Development courses at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Sweden's National Board of Trade. These measures were implemented to accelerate the Government's efforts to integrate the country's economy into regional trade and increase exports. The goal is sustainable and inclusive growth that reduces poverty and spurs sustainable inclusive growth.

3.2.4 *SDG 10: Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries*

Inequality in Zambia has slightly reduced overall as measured by the Gini coefficient, from 0.546 in 2015 to 0.507 in 2022. The UNDP Human Development Report 2023/2024 notes that the Gini coefficient for rural areas, however, worsened from 0.434 in 2015 to 0.444 in 2022 while that of the urban areas improved from 0.476 in 2015 to 0.440 in 2022. Furthermore, the 2022 LCMS data shows that the national poverty gap of approximately 26.8 percent of the population was below the poverty line with 37.5 percent in rural and 10.6 percent in urban areas. In 2023, the Zambia Human Development Index was 0.569, which puts the country in the medium





human development category ranking at 153 out of 193 countries in the Global Inequalities Index (down from 137th place in 2022).

The incidence of inequality worsened with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is projected to slowly return to pre-pandemic levels by 2025, reflecting sustained growth in the services and construction sectors that are expected to benefit the urban poor and reverse the recent increase in poverty and rural inequality. Progress with rural poverty and inequality, however, is more uncertain. While the agriculture sector which constitutes most of the rural poor is projected to grow, it is subject to high volatility due to structural barriers and effects of climate change. Furthermore, due to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNDP 2023/24 Human Development Report revealed that there was a setback in global progress, with 90 percent of countries including Zambia experiencing a decline in human development.

As inequality in the country's rural area increases, the loss in human development also increases; to improve rural living standards, the Government has taken several initiatives. To enhance agricultural

practices targeting the rural poor, the country is executing the Agricultural Development Support Project, whose principal goal is to reduce inequality via the empowerment of women, particularly in agriculture. A total amount of USD 37.2 million Sector Investment Grant from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) is used to fund the project.

Data suggests that changing income distributions and the vulnerability of the economy to shocks such as Climate Change, and the Russia-Ukraine war contribute to slow progress towards poverty reduction and inequality in the country. Data from the results of the 2022 LCMS and anticipated 2023 Household Budget Survey presents an opportunity to conduct further analysis of the key determinants of poverty and inequality in the country to inform the Government's intervention and policing; the analysis can further be used to identify the main sources of the persistence of poverty and inequality in the country, especially in rural areas. This will further enhance the Government's efforts aimed at integrating policies and reinforcing measures to jointly address poverty and inequality.



3.3 PLANET PILLAR²⁰

3.3.1 *SDG 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable*

Zambia is one of the rapidly urbanising countries in Africa, with an average growth of the urban population at approximately 3.4 percent per year. According to the 2022 Census, 7.8 million (40 percent) of Zambia's population lived in urban areas. It is projected that this rate will grow to 50.5 percent by 2030, and to 62.4 percent by 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)), which is consistent with the evolution of the average urbanisation rate of sub-Saharan Africa. This represents an increase of more than three-fold. The magnitude of this growth poses innumerable challenges in providing secure land tenure for all, adequate and affordable housing, infrastructure, urban basic services such as water supply and sanitation, solid waste disposal, and other supplies. The housing deficit is approximately 1.5 million and is projected to increase to 3 million by 2030.

In general, urbanisation has been un-coordinated and under-financed, resulting in high levels of housing informality and acute service delivery challenges. As urban population has increased, urban infrastructure development and the quality of built infrastructure have been inadequate to meet increased demand in services. This is particularly the case in Lusaka, and in the other large cities, especially along the line of rail (Kitwe, Ndola, Livingstone), and Chipata. Overall, urban areas have seen little investment in housing and infrastructure between 2000 and 2015, leading to an extensive service delivery gap. As a result, informal settlements have proliferated across Zambian cities and towns with approximately 70 percent of Lusaka's urban population living in informal settlements. The inadequate number of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) with only

45 out of 116 districts with IDPs has contributed to the mushrooming and expansion of informal settlements. Most of these settlements are in areas not originally designated for human settlements, hence prone to disasters such as floods which also result in outbreak of diseases such as cholera.

The Government not only recognises the myriad challenges of urbanisation but also the opportunities to harness the transformative potential of urbanisation for sustainable development and make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. To that effect the Government has developed a relevant policy and legislative framework that could facilitate sustainable urbanisation and includes but is not limited to the following:

- National Lands Policy (2021) and its implementation plan;
- National Housing Policy (2020) and its implementation plan;
- Urban and Regional Planning Act (2015);
- Solid Waste Regulation and Management Act (2018);
- Draft National Urbanisation Policy and its implementation plan.

Although these policies and laws form a strong foundation to address challenges of rapid urbanisation and harness its positive transformative potential, investment and implementation has been significantly low and slow. Meanwhile, the UN in Zambia, through the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), FAO, UNDP, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and UN Capital Development Fund have been supporting the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) in the implementation of the National Lands Policy working in collaboration with other cooperating partners including USAID and EU. UN-HABITAT and Japan International Cooperation Agency have supported projects in solid waste management in Kitwe and Lusaka, respectively. The Government has further taken steps to improve community level infrastructure through CDF and by promoting

²⁰ This Pillar covers the following Goals: SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, and SDG 15.





public-private partnerships at national level for commercially viable infrastructure, especially for roads and energy projects.

Zambia continues to make progress on SDG 11 concerning the promotion of liveable cities, decreasing air pollution and improving access to clean energy as well as contributing to the well-being of vulnerable groups for a healthier population under the Pedestrian First Initiative. The country validated and adopted its first ever Road Safety Investment Case Report that outlines steps and key interventions that the country must undertake to reduce economic loss, high loss of lives and injuries. This report provides an estimate of the economic costs of current road traffic injuries in Zambia, with emphasis on pedestrian injury.

The Government also built capacities around sustainable transport and took a holistic approach to solving Lusaka's transport challenges by engaging with stakeholders including women, children and PWDs to raise awareness on the positive economic impacts that non-motorised transport can have through increased productivity. Additionally, stakeholders were made aware of the social impacts of non-motorised transport through improved health and well-being of the population (especially for non-communicable diseases), and regarding environmental impacts (reduced carbon emissions and pollution) and reduced social exclusion. Private sector participation was also fostered to partner with and empower local authorities, communities, and CSOs.

Zambia held its first Car-free Day in Lusaka in 2021 as part of a global initiative that encourages individuals, communities, and cities to reduce or eliminate the use of private vehicles for a designated day. The event raised awareness around urban planning and design, challenging the car-centric approach to urban planning and design, raised awareness about the detrimental effects of excessive car usage on the environment, encouraged individuals to engage in active modes of transportation, promoting physical

activity and healthier lifestyles and provided an opportunity for communities to come together, fostering social interactions, community cohesion, and a sense of belonging.

Through the same initiative, Zambia also implemented interventions for improved road safety, which included road infrastructure improvements on traffic hotspots and improving school road safety around 6 schools selected from within Lusaka's urban areas, which were identified as hotspots during the 2021 International Road Assessment Programme. An 11-kilometre bicycle lane and pedestrian paths were also constructed to increase the pedestrian and cyclists' access to safe and designated paths.

Although most of the country's population lives in rural areas, rural-urban migration is a growing trend. UN DESA projections estimate that by 2050, approximately 62.4 percent of the population will be living in urban areas, and current dynamics indicate that this growth is predominantly going to happen in Lusaka. Population growth in Zambia, especially in urban areas, has not been matched with improvements in infrastructure for the provision of quality of housing and sanitation-related services. Migrants often live in informal settlements or poorly planned, hazard-prone areas, which often makes them the first and worst affected by natural disasters. Lusaka's population grew by an estimated 20 percent from 2010 to 2015 with two-thirds of this growth caused by internal migration from other municipalities²¹ (LCMS, 2015).

Without effective management of urban migration, many migrants face heightened risks and vulnerabilities, and local authorities must take extra care to proactively address their needs in the cities. More affordable housing, such as through low-income public housing or subsidies, would help reduce the need for informal settlements, squatting and slums.

21 The two dominant reasons for people to migrate were education (39 percent) followed by family (26 percent).



3.3.2 SDG 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

To achieve SDG 12, the Government and the UN have been collaborating to promote sustainable production and consumption. The UN has been supporting smallholder farmers who produce most of the food consumed in the country to adopt a more sustainable food system by adopting innovative and environmentally-friendly production systems. In the 2023/24 farming season, the UN with funding from the EU supported over 33,000 smallholder farmers with agricultural inputs worth USD 3.9 million to enhance promotion and scaling up of recommended structural insulated panel technologies, with a target to reach 60,000 smallholder farmers by 2027. Further, significant progress has been made in the promotion and adoption of sustainable climate-sensitive practices to boost the production and productivity of smallholder farmers. These practices have been noted to contribute to improved soil fertility, biodiversity conservation, and moisture retention. Some of the conservation agriculture practices being promoted include agroforestry, intercropping, crop rotation, and residue retention.

An estimated average of 735 million people suffer from hunger or malnutrition in the world while household habits account for nearly 570 million metric tonnes (MT) of food wasted each year globally (FAO, 2023). In keeping with the objective to halve global food waste per capita by 2030, the Government and the UN execute programmes that contribute to reducing food losses along the different levels of production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. Smallholder farmers in Zambia lose 30 to 40 percent of their produce due to post-harvest losses. To address this, awareness raising has been conducted with smallholder farmers on improved post-harvest handling and management practices as well as supporting their access and use of low-cost, affordable, improved post-harvest management techniques such as silos and Purdue Improved Crop Storage (PICS) bags. In 2022 over

200,000 PICS bags were distributed to over 104,500 farmers in Zambia.

In Zambia, solid waste management remains one of the challenges due to consumption patterns that increase use of plastics. The proliferation of electronic equipment emanates from increased acquisition of such equipment as computers, entertainment devices, mobile phones, television sets and refrigerators, rendering many old models obsolete. It is estimated that about 138,000 MT of e-waste are available annually. Most of the electrical and electronic equipment in use is imported into the country. The level of demand has led to an influx of second-hand equipment from developed countries, many of which are old, near or at end of life. Currently, there is no facility in the country for managing the disposal of e-waste in an environmentally-sound manner. E-waste contains large amounts of heavy metals and other toxic chemicals such as lead, mercury, cadmium and brominated flame retardants. Some of these are persistent organic pollutants which are known to have levels of carcinogenicity, mutagenicity and neurotoxicity. Uncontrolled burning, disassembly and disposal of electronic equipment causes a variety of environmental problems such as contamination of air, surfaces and groundwater.

The main challenges that the country faces in waste management are;

- i. insufficient capacity for the recovery and recycling of various types of waste streams such as plastics;
- ii. insufficient capacity and equipment for municipalities to deal with the collection, transportation and disposal of waste;
- iii. inadequate awareness on sound management of hazardous chemicals waste and their impact on human health and the environment;
- iv. improper bin collection systems and distances to collection bins; and
- v. lack of information about collection schedules.



Several policies and programmes have been put in place to ensure sound waste management. The National Policy on Environment is designed to create a comprehensive framework for effective natural resource utilisation and environmental conservation, sensitive to the demands of sustainable development. The Environmental Management Act (2011) provides for a life cycle approach to sound management of hazardous substances such as electrical and electronic equipment and their waste. The Act also provides for transboundary movement of hazardous waste including e-waste. Further, it provides for sustainable consumption and production which aligns to circular economy approaches.

The Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations Statutory Instrument (2018) provides for the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) to regulate the manufacture, retail, import, trade, or commercial distribution of packaging materials, and other waste products such as used lead acid batteries, used tyres, used oil, and electrical and electronic waste products. These Regulations are under review and most of the aspects dealing with e-waste will be provided for under separate E-Waste Management Regulations. Drafting of the Electronic Waste Management Regulations has commenced and is currently at the Government’s regulatory impact assessment stage. The Regulations intend to among others promote recycling, circular economy and value-addition, prevention and control of pollution.

3.3.3 SDG 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impacts

The Government is implementing measures to address the adverse impacts of climate change to ensure that the country attains climate resilience through a low-emission development pathway. Ongoing measures include the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2007); National Climate Change Response Strategy (2010); National Policy

on Climate Change (2016); and the Nationally-determined Contribution (NDC, 2016). The Government has recently put in place its Third National Communications (2021) on climate change, an updated NDC (2021), the NAP (2023) and the Green Growth Strategy (2024), to address the country’s vulnerability and resilience to climate change and to systematically implement priority adaptation actions that contribute to the achievement of the Vision 2030, national development plans and the NDC.

As a medium to long-term strategic measure, Zambia has developed the Food and Agriculture Delivery Compact which has prioritised implementation of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). Consistent with the aspirations of the 8NDP, the CASP/National Agriculture Investment Plan II, will focus on:

- i. developing farm blocks;
- ii. strengthening and improving the delivery of extension services;
- iii. promoting irrigation and water management;
- iv. managing agricultural inputs support and mechanising agriculture; and
- v. developing and operating an integrated agricultural information system.

These interventions by the Government have provided an enabling environment for UN support to Zambia in ensuring resilience and low emissions across productive sectors and systems. Specifically, the UN is supporting Zambia to invest in community irrigation schemes, early warning, post-harvest management, strengthening water resource management, and alternative livelihood²².

As part of a nine-country initiative, Zambia participated in a UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation-commissioned study on incorporating

22 “Strengthening climate resilience of agricultural livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II in Zambia” project.



culture and heritage into Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation strategies across Southern Africa. The study identifies and assesses risks threatening cultural heritage in the region. It also evaluates the current level of integration between cultural considerations and existing DRM and Climate Change Adaptation mechanisms in the country. These strategies help reduce the impact of climate change on local communities' livelihoods and cultural treasures. Zambia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its low adaptive capacity attributed to a multitude of environmental and socio-economic challenges. Subsequently, climate-sensitive sectors such as energy, agriculture, infrastructure, water, health, fisheries, wildlife and forestry are highly impacted by climate change.

Climate variability continues to be a major threat to sustainable development in the agriculture and water sectors leading to threatened food security, disruption of livelihoods, destruction of the natural and agriculture resource base, poor adaptive capacity among farmers and poor sanitation and health conditions. The integration of human mobility into national adaptation and climate change response plans and investment in preparedness and provisions for loss and damage needs to be prioritised.

Transition to low-carbon, environmentally-sustainable economies and societies is crucial for employment creation, skills upgrading, social justice and poverty eradication. To address the impact, the Government is working on a green growth strategy to attain a low-carbon, resource efficient, resilient, and socially-inclusive economy by 2030. Policies to uphold decent work during this transition must include social protection for climate-vulnerable groups; climate-resilience enterprise development support; innovation; and enterprise promotion targeting the green economy and skills development for green occupations and jobs, among others.

Climate migration, including disaster-induced internal displacement, is a reality in Zambia.

Between 2002 and 2022, 23 major flood events were reported in the country, which caused the internal displacement of 107,000 people. Of these, 3,600 were displaced due to the floods that occurred in 2022 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2024). In January 2023, heavy rainfalls and subsequent flooding affected an estimated 375,500 persons and displaced 7,500 people, representing the most severe event in 50 years according to the DMMU. Disasters, including droughts, have also led people to relocate to have better agricultural prospects, having lost their livelihoods. While detailed data on these movements is currently lacking, evidence shows that many vulnerable persons who migrated internally had to rely on negative coping mechanisms exposing them to violence and exploitation, including child labour and human trafficking.

Disaster displacement poses significant humanitarian and development challenges for the country. With the projected increase of extreme weather events, disasters may become more intense and may result in more people being displaced due to rapid and slow onset disasters. The CADRI diagnosis conducted in November 2023 highlighted the need for comprehensive actions that are required to avert, minimise, and address displacement risks, including through stronger early warning systems at the community level. The availability of stronger data on human mobility and climate change is also essential to inform disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies and enable the Government make empowered and informed decisions and provide solutions in line with international frameworks²³. Other Government efforts to address climate change vulnerability of communities include increased allocation to social cash transfer aimed at supporting economic and food insecure households such as the drought response Emergency Cash Transfer implemented in 2019. Support in form of

23 These include the Paris Agreement; the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.





irrigation infrastructure, especially in Chirundu, Mufulira and Kafue Districts, helped to increase yields as well as improve resilience of affected communities to climate change.

3.3.4 *SDG 15: Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity Loss*

The National Policy on Environment (2008) provides a safeguard for the environment and sustainable use of natural resources, and promotes socio-economic development without damaging the integrity of the environment and natural resources. Further, it promotes alternative energy sources to fuelwood and technologies to reduce the use of fuelwood and enhance carbon-sinks. The policy is implemented through the MoGEE, the MLNR and affiliated institutions such as ZEMA and the National Remote Sensing Centre. The main environmental challenges are deforestation, soil erosion, water and air pollution and wildlife depletion. Issues of landscape management are being addressed through the Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II, 2015-2025); Environment Policy and Management Act (2011); Lands Policy and Act (1996); Forests Act (2015); Agriculture Lands Act (1994); Wildlife Act (2015); and Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2023).

In the water sector, the Revised National Water Policy (2010) indicates that a “comprehensive framework for management of water resources shall be developed taking into account catchment management of water resources, stakeholder consultation and involvement, assessment, monitoring, water conservation and preservation of its acceptable quality and quantity, efficient and equitable water allocation to all users and disaster preparedness”. However, water resource monitoring is weak while over-extraction and pollution remain high. The Ministry of Water Development and

Sanitation is responsible for policy formulation and guidance on national water resources-related issues and developing both surface and groundwater resources of inland and transboundary water bodies. Three statutory bodies namely, ZEMA, the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council and the Water Resources Management Authority support the implementation of integrated water resources management.

Despite the significance of biodiversity to the national economy and the livelihoods of approximately 80 percent of the population, there is a gap in fully appreciating the value of ecosystems and establishing the private sector’s willingness to pay for ecosystem services. The NBSAP II reflects Zambia’s commitment to valuing, conserving, restoring, and sustainably using its biodiversity. However, persistent challenges, particularly low capacities at sub-national levels, hinder effective conservation. The slow progress in achieving the NBSAP II goals is attributed to inadequate data for planning conservation efforts, emphasising the need to address capacity gaps among staff and key partners, including community-based organisations. The identified challenges extend to various landscapes in Zambia, where rich biodiversity coexists with vulnerabilities to climate change and various socio-economic challenges, such as low agricultural productivity, high poverty rates, and poor infrastructure.

At the sector level, the country has suffered from weak coordination and a general lack of integrated multi-disciplinary planning, required for implementing landscape management interventions. Zambia’s efforts towards decentralised planning and implementation of development projects are yet to materialise. The MoFNP is the institution mandated to develop integrated plans in a decentralised and coordinated manner. The MoGEE serves as the climate change coordinating body and the National Designated Authority serves as the liaison for the major climate finance institutions. The MLNR serves



as the focal point on conservation of biodiversity under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Other sector Ministries have technical oversight roles to implement projects in their respective disciplinary mandates.

3.4 PEACE PILLAR

3.4.1 *SDG 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels*

Zambia remains a relatively politically stable country. The 2023 Global Peace Index positions Zambia as 63 out of 163 countries with an overall score of 1.9 out of 5 (the lower the score the more peaceful the country). Within the region, the country has actively supported the AU and SADC mandates and processes related to the promotion and deepening of democratic governance in Africa by ensuring the conduct of transparent and credible electoral processes. Since 1989, Zambia has been an active contributing country to peace-keeping operations

to the UN and the AU. To further consolidate Zambia's positive peace and political trajectory, collective and collaborative action is still required to deepen inclusive participation particularly for women, the youth and PWDs.

3.4.2 *Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*

The Constitution of Zambia provides for freedom of association and assembly; however, challenges and gaps persist in fully fulfilling and upholding these rights. Historically, the Public Order Act has been applied by law enforcement and security forces to, among others, restrict and prohibit assemblies by civil society and opposition parties and to forcibly disperse rallies and demonstrations. In response, a new Public Gathering Bill was drafted in 2022, with extensive stakeholder consultations in conformity with Zambia's obligations under the International Human Rights Law.

In December 2023, Zambia passed the Access to Information Act after a protracted process. This is important as access to information is a fundamental



human right as protected by Article 19.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; however, the Act is yet to be operationalised. To ensure that the Act is effective, the Government needs to build strong capacities in State institutions dealing with these matters, including providing adequate funding. Furthermore, continued support to the Government is necessary to enact the Zambia Media Council Act which is intended to promote media self-regulation.

3.4.3 Rule of Law and Access to Justice

In 2021, the Government committed to restoring full respect for human rights and the rule of law with a view to consolidating Zambia’s democracy and seeding the conditions for economic recovery, development and sustained peace. These will be achieved through the 8NDP under Strategic Development Area 4 of the development outcome which focuses on Improved Rule of Law, Human Rights, and Constitutionalism.

Despite these achievements, much remains to be done²⁴. Additionally, Zambia must redouble efforts to protect fundamental freedoms and rights. National stakeholders such as CSOs, the Law Association of Zambia, the Zambia Council of Catholic Bishops, and the Zambia Human Rights Commission have expressed concern about restrictions to some civil and political rights and called for remedial measures. While the Government has asserted that it is upholding the law, including against divisive hate speech and seditious practices, progress aiming to accelerate development and deliver on socio-economic rights must be coupled with full respect for all civil and political rights.

24 Some of the recommendations to be implemented are reflected in the following documents: the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Zambia’s combined fifth to seventh reports, adopted in June 2022; the Human Rights Committee, adopted in March 2023; the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, adopted in March 2023; and Zambia’s Fourth Cycle Universal Periodic Review, adopted in July 2023, which saw Zambia supporting 226 of the 250 recommendations.

3.4.4 Access to Justice and Secure Protection of the Law

Secure protection of the law followed by labour and employment rights remain serious concerns in Zambia. Between 2021 and 2022, 2,123 cases of human rights violations were documented by Zambia’s National Human Rights Commission.

Regarding deprivation of personal liberty, cases bordered on several arbitrary and unlawful arrests by the police and other law enforcement agencies. The suspects were in some instances not informed of the reasons for their arrests; not charged promptly; detained for purposes of conducting investigations and denied police bond; and subjected to lengthy periods of detention before being brought to court. Further, there were cases of unlawful deprivation of liberty for alleged irregular migrants.

This situation is compounded by violations of the right to life. In 2021, nine cases of extra-judicial killings with impunity, by law enforcement officers, were recorded by the Human Rights Commission and the cases increased to 26 in 2022. All loss of life was attributed to police brutality. In 2022, the Commission recorded 76 complaints of torture, up from 39 complaints recorded in 2021. The Commission acknowledged that cases of extra-judicial killings and torture could be higher than it had recorded.

To address the use of excessive use of force by State agents, the Government must invest in continuous good practices for law enforcement, including capacity-building and training, and ensure prompt investigations and accountability when violations are proven.

3.4.5 Judicial Integrity and the Court System

The appointment process of judges continues to have implications for judicial independence. Judges are appointed by the President on the



recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission whose composition includes the Chairperson and Attorney-General, who are also appointed by the President. Progressive steps such as pronouncing judicial reform have taken place; however, these steps need to be accompanied by concrete actions including transparency, merit, and due diligence in the appointment and selection process of judges.

Furthermore, the administration of justice is one of the key functions of Zambia's judiciary. Several reports have pointed to delays in the administration of justice in the court system emanating from inadequate court infrastructure and office accommodation across the judiciary. Other factors include lengthy detentions without or delayed trial due to insufficient resources in the judicial system; missing court records and exhibits; compromised adjudicators; and reported practices of corruption among court officials.

3.4.6 Prisons and Correctional Centres

From the country's population of 19.6 million, approximately 26,150 are inmates in prisons and correctional centres versus a total capacity of 10,500. They include remandees, convicts, the condemned, juveniles in conflict with the law, and prohibited immigrants. Among these, approximately 645 inmates are minors as well as circumstantial children. The Zambia Correctional Service is overcrowded by nearly 250 percent caused by factors such as inadequate physical infrastructure; legal and procedural setbacks; delayed court judgments; missing court records; corruption; administrative inefficiencies; and inadequate human resources. Further, the living conditions of inmates in prisons are harsh and below international standards, with regard for instance to accommodation and sleeping space; food and nutrition; health and medical care; education; healthcare; hygiene; water and sanitation; skills training; recreation; and rehabilitation. Living conditions are worse for women, PWDs, the elderly, remandees, juveniles, circumstantial children, and prohibited immigrants.

3.4.7 Corruption and Bribery

Zambia scored 37 on a scale from 0 ("highly corrupt") to 100 ("very clean") on Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index and ranked 98th among 180 countries. Still, corruption remains high in Zambia and continues to impede the development of the country, consequently infringing the privileges of human rights and good governance. Corruption detracts from the country's ability to fulfil its obligations under the UN Convention Against Corruption.

Zambia has ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption (2007), the AU Convention on Combating and Preventing Corruption (2007) and enacted an Anti-Corruption Act (2012). However, consistent implementation and enforcement of these agreements and statutes needs improvement. While the law for example, makes provision for the declaration of assets by Members of Parliament and Ministers when entering and leaving public office, there is no subsidiary legislation providing for sanctions for breach or failure to declare assets.

To address corruption, the country requires sustained efforts to strengthen preventive aspects such as asset declaration disclosure and lifestyle audits supported by a strengthened, functional, and independent judiciary. This includes advancing the Assets Declaration Bill directed at public officials, currently at drafting stages, and the Anti-Corruption Act of 2012 which is under review. In response to concerns raised by stakeholders including CSOs on the pace of anti-corruption reforms, stronger collaboration between CSOs and the Government, including improved participation of citizens, especially the youth and women, is required.





3.4.8 *Strengthening of Institutions that Enhance Security, Human Rights, Peace, Security, and Justice*

Vulnerable groups such as women, girls, persons living with HIV, IDPs, migrants, refugees, PWDs, and other key populations continue to remain far from achieving gender equality and disability inclusion. The Committee on National Guidance and Gender Matters of the National Assembly reported that most women and girls with disabilities are excluded from several entitlements and services such as education, healthcare, and employment. Other vulnerable groups include persons living with albinism who continue to experience discrimination and violence. There is need to amplify national policies and laws to ensure the protection of all groups and to adopt measures to address their specific needs.

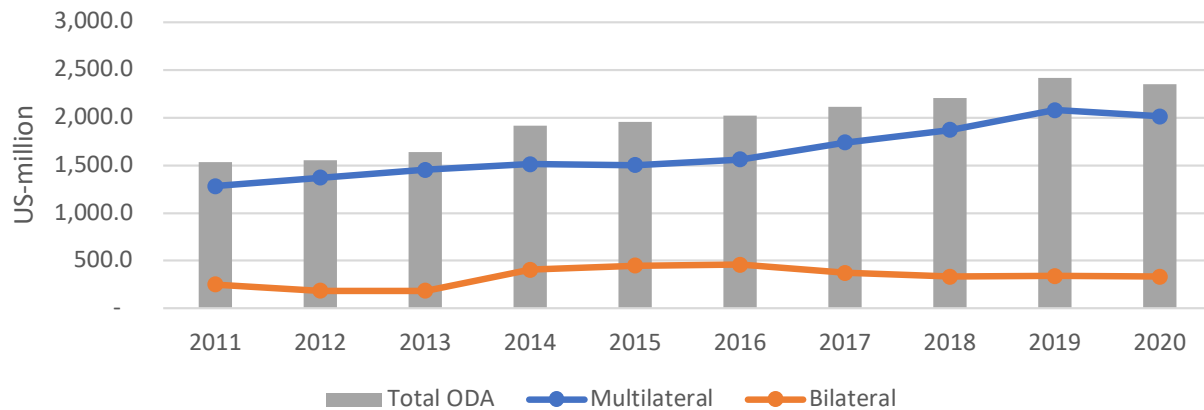
3.4.9 *Legal Identity for All*

With the National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics policies now in place, Zambia continues to push towards the 8NDP targets which include 50 percent

under-5 birth registration rate and 100 percent issuance of biometric identity cards by 2026. Several challenges impede Zambia's capacity to attain these targets. These include fragmentation and disjointed registration systems, especially through incomplete and partially manual civil registration; limited human capital; inadequate infrastructure; financial constraints; low citizen demand for birth registration; and over-reliance on an outdated legislation, the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1973. Nationally, only 14.3 percent of children under the age of five have registered births, with 6.6 percent having birth certificates (2018 ZDHS). The Government has made significant strides in decentralising national identity registration at district level. For instance, in 2023, the Government launched phase three of the Integrated National Registration Information System. As of September 2023, over 1 million individuals were registered out of the 10 million target and 157,766 births registered against a target of approximately 500,000 births.



Figure 6: Bilateral and Multilateral ODA to Zambia, 2011-2020



Source: Zambia Development Finance Assessment Report

3.5 PARTNERSHIPS

3.5.1 SDG 17: Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The country's development finance assistance has changed in recent years with the expansion of development finance options available beyond Official Development Assistance (ODA). New sources of development finance such as climate finance and support from development finance institutions have become increasingly significant, signalling potential shifts in Zambia's development finance landscape.

3.5.2 Official Development Assistance

ODA to Zambia is received through the sector wide approach, sector budget support, project support, and direct budget support. Despite the Government preferring receiving ODA through direct budget support, some cooperating partners prefer to channel these funds through project approaches that is, off-budget. This is because funders prefer to channel

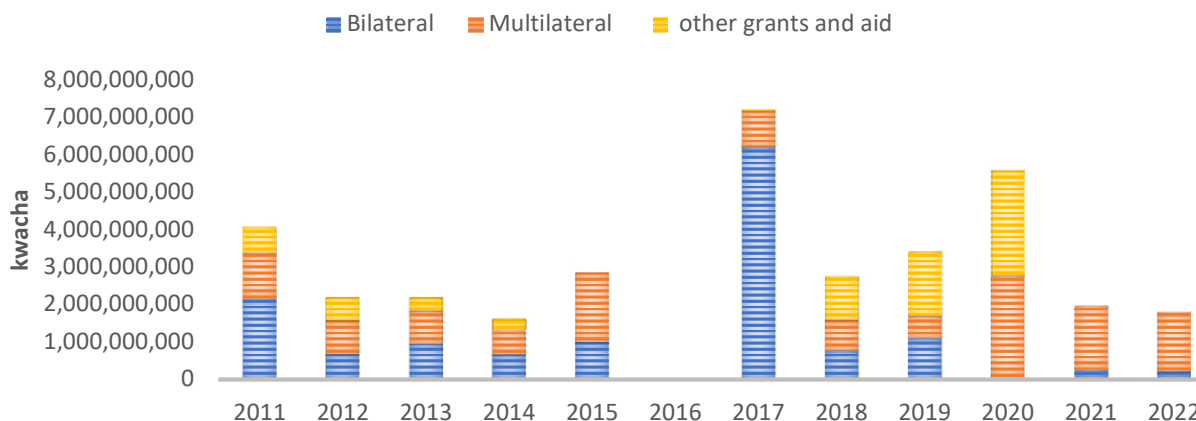
resources to programmes that are aligned to their priority strategies thus retaining direct control on the utilisation of funds. Except for 2020, Zambia's ODA receipts have generally been rising over time and its composition includes all bilateral and multilateral inflows, excluding commercial creditors.

Between 2011 and 2020, Zambia has on average received USD 1.9 billion in total ODA flows depicted in Figure 6 above. ODA finance has on average contributed 26 percent to Zambia's national budget in the recent past and this has been in terms of projects, loans, and programme grants. Overall, ODA received from multilateral sources has been 80 percent higher than that from bilateral sources. The country has received an average of USD 331 million in bilateral ODA while multilateral ODA averaged USD 1.6 billion. Although the general trend of multilateral ODA has been on an increase, a notable decline on the bilateral ODA of 27 percent was observed between the 2015 and 2020.

25 Note: 2021 and 2022 are based on estimates.



Figure 7: International Public Grants to Zambia, 2011-2022²⁵



Source: Development Finance Assessment Report (2023)

In recent years, Zambia’s ODA has mostly been channelled towards the energy sector, followed by the agriculture sector. Primarily, these funds were channelled towards technical and operational capability enhancement, promotion of sustainable practices against climate change, as well as the promotion of energy-saving and renewable sources.

3.5.3 International Grants

Total international grants to Zambia consist of multilateral, bilateral, and other grants, as well as aid. From 2011 to 2022, Zambia received an average of approximately USD 150 million (ZMW 2.8 billion) in total grants. However, over this period, grant funding fell from approximately USD 210 million (ZMW 4 billion) to USD 95 million (ZMW 1.8 billion), indicating an average reduction of 55 percent (Development Finance Assessment (DFA) Report, 2022). This trend underscores the need for the Government and other development actors, including the UN in Zambia, to seek alternative funding sources.

Furthermore, the most substantial sum of total international grants Zambia received between 2011 and 2022 was approximately USD 745 million (ZMW 7.1 billion) in 2017, as depicted in Figure 7. Of this amount, a significant portion, approximately USD 653 million (ZMW 6 billion), was bilateral aid. The leading bilateral donors in 2017 were the USA (USAID), providing about USD 467 million, and Germany, contributing USD 120 million.

In contrast, Zambia’s multilateral grants have averaged approximately USD 108 million annually, forming a considerable fraction of total international grants in 2021 and 2022. This increase is partially attributable to COVID-19 response efforts from various agencies. Key sources of multilateral grants include the African Development Bank, the World Bank (WB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the Global Fund.

4



CHAPTER 4: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND





4.1 WOMEN AND GIRLS

4.1.1 *Discrimination Against Women (Politics, Education and Labour Market)*

Gender equality is at the forefront of the 2030 Development Agenda. Zambia has a high Gender Inequality Index of 0.526. Women and girls are more likely to be excluded than boys and men. Several factors combine to increase the risk of persons of concern being left behind and these include, but are not limited to, regulatory and policy frameworks; legal and civil documentation; low access to social protection for people of concern; low access to skills development and tertiary education; and poor services infrastructure.

Zambia is signatory to several international treaties on gender, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights; and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The country has also committed to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, and has a progressive legal framework on gender equality.

In the August 2021 general elections, Zambians elected the second woman Vice-President in the country’s history. The National Assembly elected its first ever female Speaker, along with a female first Deputy Speaker. However, the country continues to lag in women’s participation and representation in politics²⁶. Whereas women comprised 53.4 percent

of the registered voters during the 2021 elections, under-representation of women is evident at various levels including Cabinet, Parliament, Provincial Ministers, and Local Government. During the 2021 elections, there was only one female presidential candidate out of the 16 contestants. Twenty-one percent of the parliamentary candidates were female, while 10 percent vied for council elections. The current Parliament has only 26 elected and nominated women out of 167 Members of Parliament, representing only 15 percent, a slight decrease from 16.8 percent in the previous Parliament.

The electoral system has been identified as one of many factors hindering the country’s progress towards gender equality in elections and politics. Compared to other systems, such as proportional representation, for example, the first past the post is not ideal for gender equality and social inclusion. Further, whereas Article 45 of the Constitution provides that “the election of President, Member of Parliament or councillor shall ensure ... fair representation of the various interest groups in society (and) ... gender equity in the National Assembly or council”, there is currently no legal requirement for political parties to present candidate lists that adhere to this provision.

Other factors include underlying cultural, religious, and patriarchal tendencies located within traditional and customary rules and behaviour; the lack of political will and societal attitudes (stereotypes) to adopt women as candidates; and developmental inequalities, namely high poverty levels, and low economic and financial status on the part of women to raise adequate resources for participating in elections. In the long-term, there is need to work towards a more inclusive electoral system, and a new regulatory framework for political parties which makes gender equality and women’s empowerment a central tenet for registration, funding, and electoral participation.

26 There are 142 women (8 percent) out of 1,858 Councillors; 15 out of 116 Mayors/Council Chairpersons (12.9 percent); and 5 (including the Vice-President) out of 28 Cabinet Ministers (17.8 percent). At provincial level, the country has only 2 female Ministers out of 10, translating to 20 percent. In traditional leadership, women are also underrepresented; out of 288 chiefs, only 28 are women while there is no woman among the four Paramount Chiefs, and only 3 out of 45 Senior Chiefs are female. Despite this, women account for 51 percent of the country’s population and 53.4 percent of registered voters.



4.1.2 *Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy*

Child marriage is one of the retrogressive harmful practices in the world with multiple consequences, especially on adolescents and young people. Though child marriage affects both girls and boys, girls are disproportionately affected due to childbearing and childcaring which predisposes them to limited access to formal schooling and other career development opportunities. About 1 in 3 girls is married before their 18th birthday. Twenty-nine percent of women aged 20–24 in Zambia are married before the age of 18. Therefore, there is need to build on the momentum that has so far

been built over the years to curb the menace. Further, despite the country's progressive re-entry policy, adolescent girls find it hard to return to school after childbirth, especially when the family support system is limited, because they need to care for children.

In addition, limited access to information, reproductive health services and livelihood opportunities predispose adolescent girls to adolescent pregnancy, HIV, sexually-transmitted infections, fistula and poor health outcomes. Adolescent pregnancies are a push factor for child marriage in Zambia.



4.1.3 Gender-based Violence

GBV continues to be a big problem permeating Zambian society. According to the VSU, 42,965 cases of GBV were reported countrywide in 2023 compared with 33,536 cases recorded in 2022 showing an increase of 9,429 (63 percent increase). The risk of GBV is also heightened for women and girls on the move, hence the need for protection against such threats during all stages of the migration cycle. While real-time data on GBV prevalence in Zambia is limited, available sources demonstrate that GBV cases are still worryingly high and influenced by a culture of silence.

To address GBV, the Government and partners have put in place various legislation namely, the amended Constitution (2016); Anti-Gender Based Violence Act (2011); Gender Equity and Equality Act (2015); and the 2023 National Gender Policy among several measures, to promote gender equity and equality.

School-related GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse are two forms of GBV that are widespread and not appropriately addressed. To curb these, the UN engagement with traditional leaders and men’s networks has strengthened the referral systems at community level to ensure violence against women and girls is reported at the anti-GBV village-led one-stop centres as well as at the hospital-based organised systems of care.

Zambia is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women whose Monitoring Committee has clearly stated that “gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men”. The Committee has requested all State parties to include information on GBV in their periodic reports and measures taken to address this scourge. Zambia’s seventh to ninth reports are expected to be reviewed by the Committee in 2024, giving the country a renewed opportunity to

reflect on and accelerate actions to eradicate GBV. In collaboration with the Zambia Law Development Commission, and the Gender Division, the UN supported the review of the Anti-GBV Act of 2011 to incorporate penalties and harmonise it with other legal instruments.

Despite the interventions above, more work on GBV remains to ensure drivers such as deep-rooted negative gender and cultural norms, women’s low levels of education, and patriarchal system, are mitigated.

4.2 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Zambia is signatory to key conventions for the protection of the rights of PWDs. The country has taken several constitutional, legal, policy, and programmatic measures to promote and protect these rights. The 2015 Zambia National Disability Survey (NDS) results showed that the prevalence of disability was estimated to be 10.9 percent among adults 18 years or older. It was higher in urban than in rural areas, and higher among females than among males. Among children 2 to 17 years old, the prevalence was estimated to be 4.4 percent. The most common functional problem reported was with sight; followed by problems with walking, remembering, hearing, self-care and communication. The NDS data showed a marked difference between disabled and non-disabled secondary school level attainment in both rural and urban areas, with far fewer PWDs having completed secondary school.

Technological developments have opened new opportunities for inclusive education. Accessible learning platforms, screen readers, captioning, adaptive learning software and virtual reality technologies have made educational materials more accessible and created immersive learning experiences for students with disabilities. The development of the Data Management Information System has created an enabling environment for effective data management, planning, and



financing in service delivery for PWDs. Integration of smart technologies with mobility aids has further improved their effectiveness by providing features like obstacle detection and navigation assistance. Technological innovations have also revolutionised communication options for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, accessible workplace technologies and telecommuting options have promoted employment opportunities for PWDs.

Physical access to healthcare facilities for young PWDs is a challenge due to inappropriate transport and infrastructure issues, especially in rural areas. Women and girls with disabilities experience barriers to access mainstream services. Access to other facilities, such as GBV response shelters, courts of law and schools, is also challenging. Mainstreaming disability inclusion in policies and guidelines remains key and urgent on the development agenda. Training of social cash transfer beneficiaries with disabilities has been undertaken on financial literacy and financial inclusion aimed at enhancing economic self-reliance and social inclusion, through the creation of their own income-generating opportunities.

The Government also launched the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan for the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities to provide an operational framework to enhance the Agency's performance in line with the 8NDP. The Plan outlines disability services that promote access and participation of PWDs, provision of accessible services, infrastructure and information across all sectors, and mainstreaming of disability in interventions. The revision of the 2014 Social Protection Policy has also provided for more enhanced disability inclusion in social protection programming. This includes access to several social protection programmes by PWDs from birth to death. The National Policy for PWDs is currently being revised and it is envisaged that it will facilitate the realisation of the potential and aspiration of PWDs.

4.3 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND OTHER GROUPS

4.3.1 *Refugee Situation in Zambia*

As of end of 2023, the country is home to 95,518 forcibly displaced persons, of whom 72,414 refugees, 5,554 asylum-seekers, and 17,550 former refugees. While the majority of the forcibly displaced have been in the country for decades, the country has received an average of approximately 700 new arrivals per month during the year 2023. This is an increase compared to 2022 and is largely attributed to the lead up to the national elections and armed violence in the DRC. The Government, the UN and other stakeholders have prepared a contingency plan and are monitoring the situation in case of a large influx.

In 2023 the Government moved a step closer to a more favourable protection environment with the approval of the first ever National Refugee Policy. This Policy paves the way for the harmonisation of legal and policy frameworks to facilitate increased access to rights and lasting local solutions for both refugees and former refugees. The UN supported the Government to launch the Policy in January 2024 and provided expertise to the Government to assist in the implementation of the Policy. Ten pledges were made at the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum with the Vice-President representing Zambia²⁷.

²⁷ The pledges are: Enhanced Local Integration and Documentation for Former Refugees; Empowering Refugees Through Diversified Livelihood; Digitised Civil Registration and Integrating Refugees into the Integrated National Registration Information System; Inclusion of Refugees and Former Refugees in the Farmer Input Support Programme; Comprehensive and Full Cycle Inclusion in Education; Social Inclusion Through Sports, Arts, and Culture; Access to Electricity and Sustainable Energy by Connecting the Three Settlements into the National Grid; Inclusion and Distinctly Reflecting Refugees in National Statistics; Developing Alternatives to Immigration Detention of Refugees and Migrants; and Inclusion of Refugees in the National Health Insurance Scheme provided by the National Health Insurance Management Authority.





Similarly, in support of the Global Compact on Refugees and the promise of the 2030 Agenda to Leave No One Behind in the collective pursuit of the SDGs, the UN in Zambia made pledges through the UN Common Pledge 2.0 to support the Government implement the above pledges. Through this Common Pledge the UN will continue to advocate for refugees and former refugees to have access to national services and be included in national plans such as, but not limited to, civil and legal documentation, education, health, sustainable energy, social protection, and decent work.

In 2023, the UN and the Government initiated an electrification project in Meheba Settlement which will connect the settlement and the surrounding host community areas in Kalumbila District. The project will advance “Access to Electricity and Sustainable Energy” by connecting the three settlements into the national grid and will benefit the refugees and hosting communities’ access to clean energy. The UN will continue to support the Government for full implementation of the pledge and electrifying the remaining two settlements.

The UN supported Zambia’s application to the World Bank Group (WBG) for financing under the IDA 20 Window for Host Communities and Refugees. The joint UN-WBG protection assessment concluded the protection environment in Zambia was feasible for this financing and the WB announced it would be a full grant. Throughout 2024 the UN will continue to provide expert support to the Government as the project design and approval processes for the grant move forward.

4.3.2 *Migration and Internal Displacements*

A number of migrants use Zambia as one of the routes to their destinations, whose vulnerability to human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, remains a concern. The country’s strategic location in Southern Africa attracts both regular and irregular migration flows as it maintains a relatively

open-door policy towards migration, most notably from its neighbouring countries as well as the East and Horn of Africa. These vulnerable groups are often systematically socially excluded and disadvantaged due to discrimination based on their migrant status or by having been displaced from their original home. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they may often be exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey.

Threats posed by transnational organised crime groups such as illicit drugs and human trafficking, which extend beyond the borders of the country, must also be considered due to Zambia’s location in Africa and the existence of criminal networks operating in Southern Africa. The extent of illicit drug trafficking in Zambia is currently unknown. In 2007, the Inter-agency Anti-trafficking Working Group was established which was amended in 2022. Furthermore, in 2022 the country developed a National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants and related Implementation Plan.

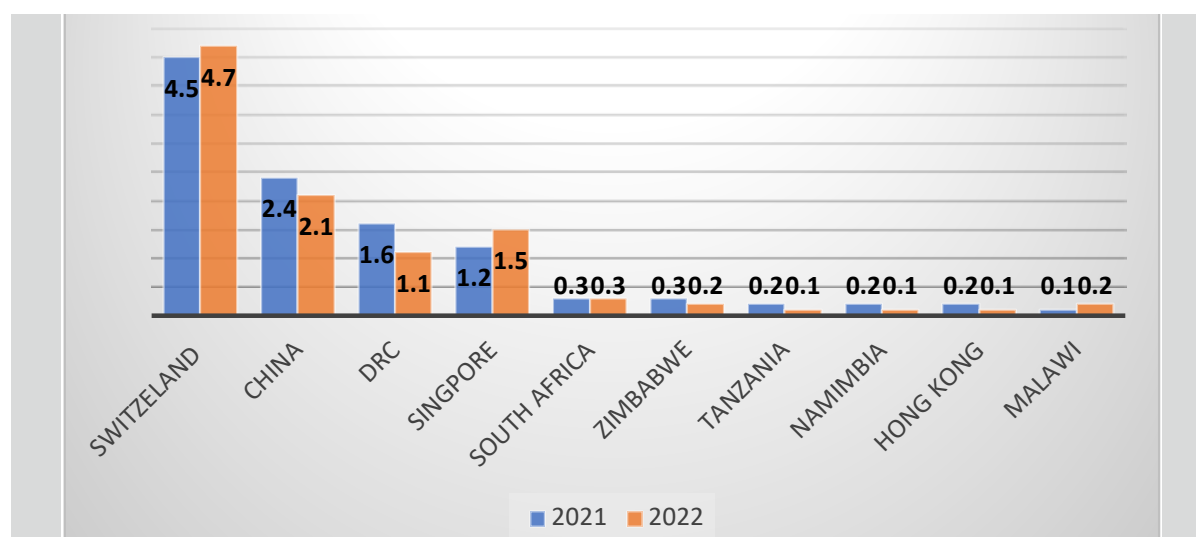
In 2018, Zambia became a signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration which facilitates orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people. The Government, with the support of the UN, has developed policy frameworks for migration management and has developed multiple policies, frameworks, and guidelines to address migration management. One notable framework is a National Diaspora Policy intending to harness the diaspora’s human, social, and financial capital as well as a Labour Migration Strategy to address unemployment challenges to ensure all migrant groups, including but not limited to refugees, return migrants and IDPs, have access to labour market opportunities. The UN is also supporting the Government in implementing policies, including the National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants, to address different aspects of migration such as strengthening response mechanisms for forced migration, and managing internal migration effectively.

5



CHAPTER 5: CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS



Figure 8: Top Ten Destination Areas for Zambia's Exports (USD Million), 2021-2022

Source: BoZ and ZamStats

Zambia is a member of SADC and COMESA and is strategically located along the regional transport and infrastructure corridors linking Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Africa. The Government prioritises regional and international trade to promote economic diversification. The SADC Protocol on Trade and the COMESA Trade Protocol are key regional frameworks impacting on the conduct of trade in the region in addition to bilateral trade agreements among Member States.

5.1 Trade Flows

Trade flows have not changed significantly due to various factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Zambia's exports have traditionally been dominated by copper which according to the 2022 Bank of Zambia (BoZ) Direction of Trade Report accounted for USD 2.1 billion in quarter 2 of 2022 in export earnings, followed by salt, sulphur, earth and stones, iron and steel, inorganic chemicals and compounds of precious metals (BoZ, 2022). The country's import commodities amounted to USD 8.9 billion in 2022 comprising of nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, vehicles, parts and accessories, mineral

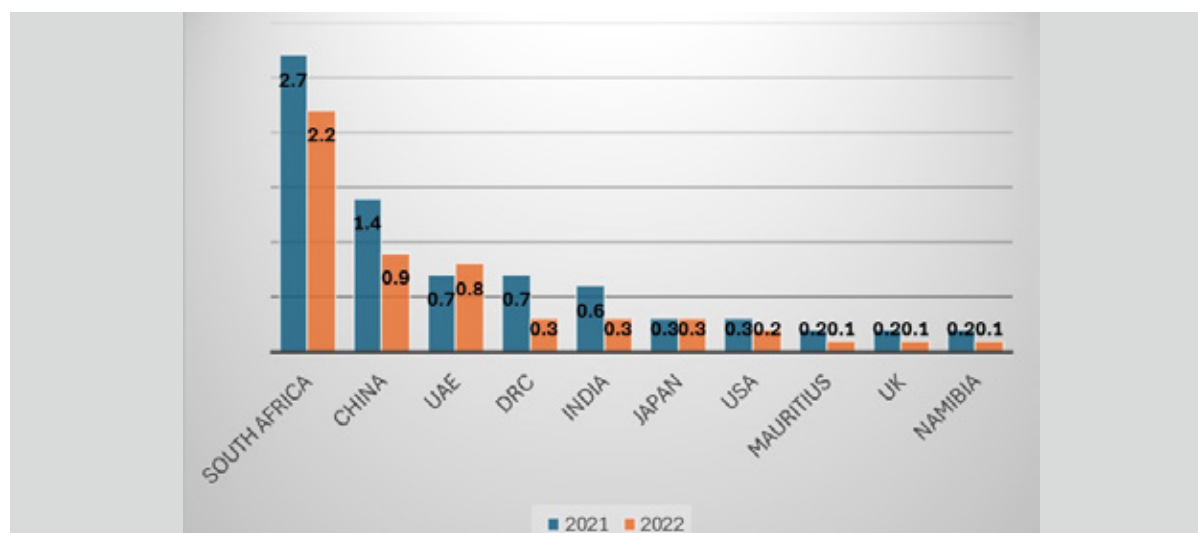
fuels, oils and products, plastics and articles thereof and pharmaceutical products.

In 2022, Zambia's total trade increased to approximately USD 20.7 billion, an increase of approximately 13 percent registered in 2021. In 2022, total exports increased slightly to USD 11.6 billion from USD 11.1 billion in 2021. The performance of imports was not impressive either. Total imports increased to approximately USD 9.1 billion in 2022, compared with USD 7.1 billion in 2021. Trade surplus declined to approximately USD 2.6 billion in 2022, compared to 2021, which stood at USD 4.1 billion (BoZ, 2022). The volatility in copper prices due to the war in Ukraine, largely contributed to the decrease in trade surplus.

As shown in Figure 8, in 2022 Zambia's main export markets were Switzerland with a total amount of USD 4.7 million, up from USD 4.5 million in 2021. Other markets include China, DRC and Singapore. Major exports include copper, iron and steel, salt, sulphur, earth, and stone.



Figure 9: Origin of Imports by Country (USD Million), 2021-2022



Source: BoZ and ZamStats

As shown in Figure 9, the country's major import source was South Africa which accounted for USD 2.7 million in 2021 and USD 2.2 million in 2022. The decline in imports was due to COVID-19 which disrupted trade and regional value chains. Its top imports were nuclear reactors, machinery and mechanical appliances, vehicles and parts, and fertilisers. Other major import sources include China, United Arab Emirates and DRC.

5.3 Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration

Trade facilitation has the potential to enhance availability, accessibility, stability, and consumption of a variety of food items from global markets. Improved trade facilitation lowers transaction costs. Trade facilitation also supports the development of stronger supply chain resilience, which advances the achievement of SDG 9. Thus, stability must be promoted in the nation's main export and import zones if the SDGs, particularly SDG 9, are to be achieved.

The full implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement is key and is expected to boost the continent's GDP by USD 450 billion, bringing it closer to USD 29 trillion

by 2050. It is anticipated to bring an increase of GDP of approximately USD 2.5 trillion to the continent. Zambia as a State Party to the Agreement, having deposited her instruments of ratification in 2021 and in the same year launched a national implementation strategy, has laid the platform for the full participation of national stakeholders. Zambia's large number of MSMEs need to be capacitated to produce competitive products for the larger African market.

Furthermore, under the AfCFTA, small-scale cross-border traders will be able to establish connections with bigger markets outside of Zambia allowing them to increase their market share and enhance sustainability of operations. Reducing tariffs, streamlining border clearance processes, bolstering security against theft, seizure of products, and addressing cases of sexual harassment at border points are some of the ways this will be accomplished. As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Zambia also benefits from a variety of preferential market access initiatives such as the EU Everything-But-Arms initiative under which Zambian goods exported to the EU enjoy duty-free, quota-free treatment. Since the initiative is not subject to periodical renewal, like the EU Generalised System of Preference scheme,





it offers higher certainty for exporters from LDCs such as Zambia, and facilitates investment decisions and further provides an incentive to diversify the export structure and to invest in new industries and products with the aim of promoting industrialisation.

The movement of people across national boundaries is a key enabler of trade. Accession to regional protocols on the free movement of people and the attendant right to residence and establishment is critical. Zambia's National Migration Policy (2022) acknowledges the inherent connection between trade, migration, and cross-border human mobility. The country has taken steps to enhance both human mobility and trade facilitation to boost small-scale cross-border trade flows. Initiatives for addressing some of the bottlenecks experienced at borders include opening of one-stop border posts such as Chirundu, Nakonde-Tunduma, Mwami-Mchinji, and Kazungula. Zambia has also increased the number of its borders that are automated and use border management information systems as opposed to manual processing systems to enhance security and speed up processing and dissemination of data. In addition, the country has a Cross-Border Permit which allows citizens from other COMESA member States to enter Zambia to undertake trade for a period of three months.

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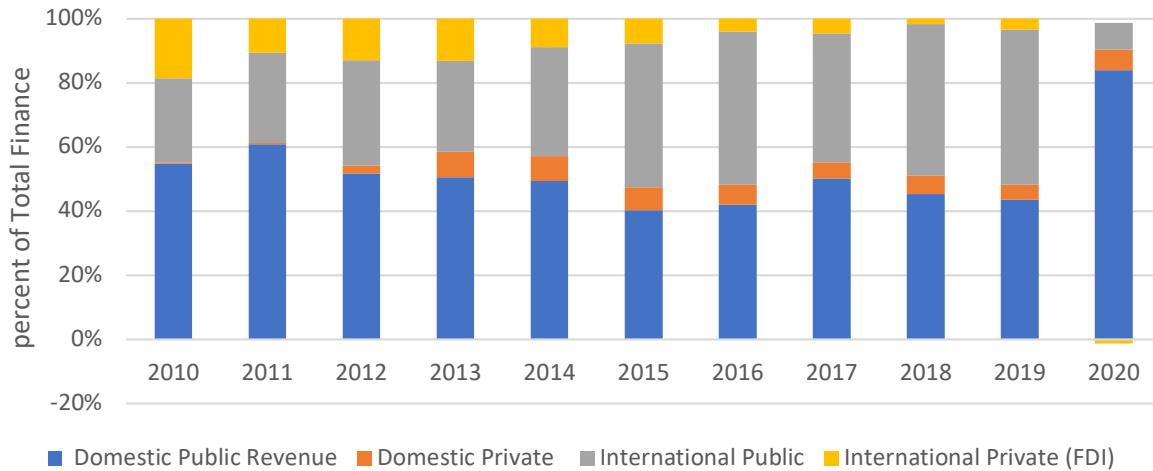


CHAPTER 6: FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE





Figure 10: Composition of Development Finance (share in total)



Source: MoFNP (Fiscal Tables, Annual Economic Reports, Consultations); World Bank

6.1 Overview of Finance Landscape for SDGs

Zambia draws its financing from a combination of sources which includes tax revenues, non-tax revenues, borrowing from the domestic securities market and external markets, and foreign grants. The 2023 Development Finance Assessment report reveals that during the period 2016 to 2022, domestic financing grew by 875 percent, external financing increased by 500 percent while tax revenue, non-tax revenue, and grants nominally increased by 156 percent, 77 percent, and 234 percent, respectively. This suggests that financing (domestic and international) has dominated Zambia’s resource envelope between 2016 and 2022. Debt accounts for the bulk of this external financing. Over this period, Zambia borrowed heavily to finance its infrastructure projects, triggering a debt crisis that the country is currently battling. In addition, grants have stagnated over the period, in line with recent global trends.

Although domestic revenue (tax and non-tax) accounts for the largest share of GDP, it has stagnated over the past years, averaging 20.8 percent of GDP from 2015 to 2021. Despite an increase in domestic

revenues, expenditures have continued to outstrip revenue collections, thereby forcing the Government to borrow more, resulting into a debt crisis.

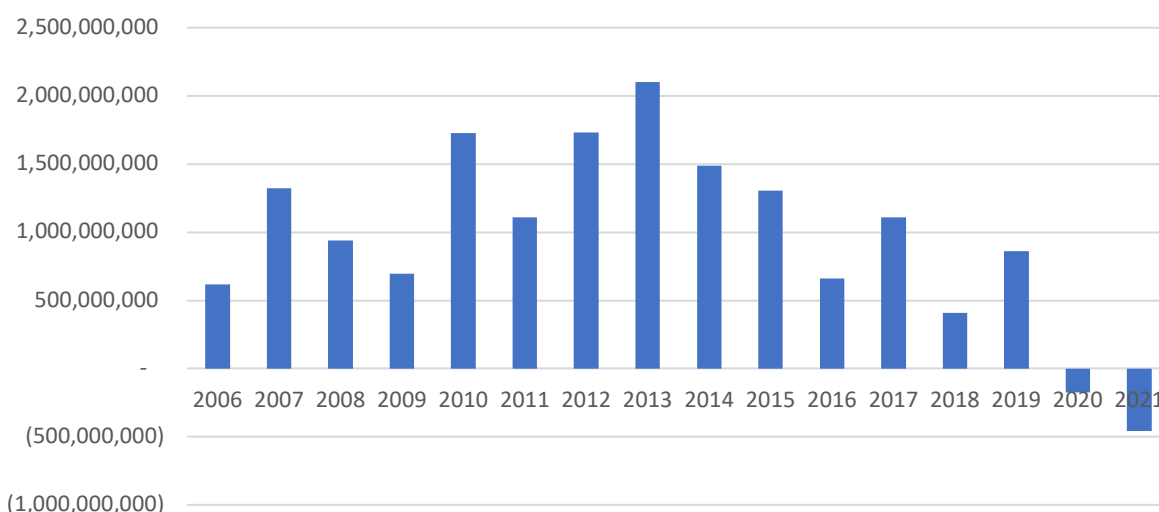
The debt crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered the development finance landscape, forcing the Government to look more to domestic sources (public and private) than international sources (see Figure 10). Consequently, in 2020, the share of domestic public finance in the total resource pool drastically increased to 78.6 percent from 30.9 percent in 2020.

6.2 Foreign Direct Investments

Foreign direct investment (FDI) continues to play a key role in the development trajectory of the country’s economy as vindicated by the strong relationship between foreign investment and economic growth. In line with economic reforms, Zambia has encouraged private investment in all major growth sectors leading to significant private investment in the energy, transport and telecommunications sectors. The Government’s major obligation is to ensure that FDI contributes to the economic well-being of citizens in their respective communities by channelling



Figure 11: FDI Flows for Zambia from 2006 to 2021



Source: MoFNP and World Bank

investments into zones that have the most potential to create decent jobs and reduce poverty.

Figure 11 shows that since 2014, FDI net inflows have been on the decline owing to several factors. This can be attributed to the decline in investments in the mining sector that offset the increase in FDI in manufacturing, deposit-taking, and the information and communication sectors. The investor perception is that the existing fiscal and monetary policy rate have negative effects on their operations. Issues of concern include factors such as exchange rate depreciation, rising inflation, a fall in copper prices, increase in the cost of borrowing, Government arrears to suppliers, unpaid value-added tax and increase in property tax.

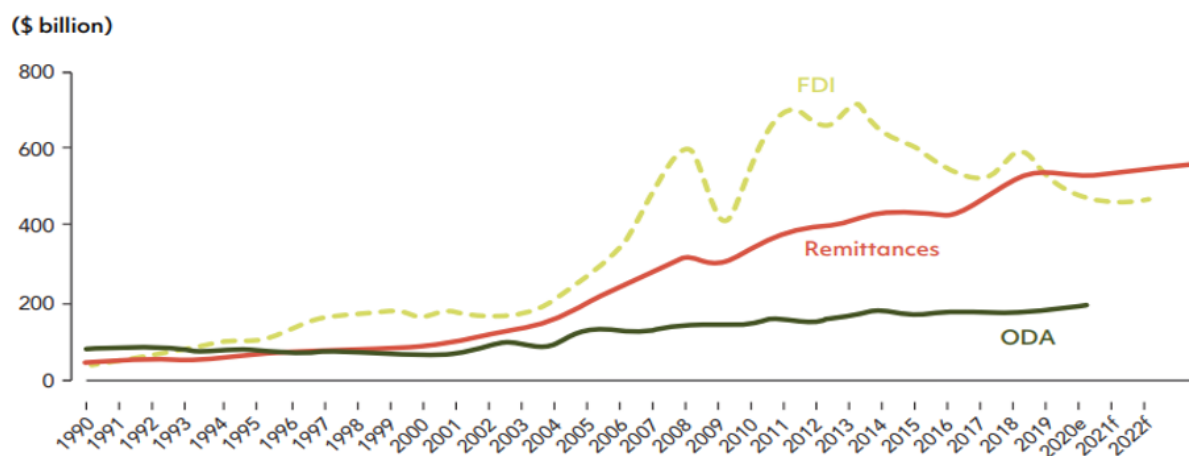
During the period 2020-2021, FDI in-flows into Zambia significantly contracted, recording negative growth of USD 173 million and USD 457 million in 2020 and 2021, respectively. The contraction was attributed mostly to lower re-invested earnings and debt repayments by the mining and quarrying sector. The major source country for FDI liability flows in the period 2020-2021 was Canada, mostly in form of retained profits. The other three major contributors were China, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

6.3 Remittances

The country's inflow of remittances has been growing over the years; it almost tripled in the recent five-year period from 2017 to 2021, growing by roughly fivefold, reaching nearly USD 215 million (World Bank, 2022). Over the years, remittances have surpassed both FDI and ODA in poor nations, as illustrated in Figure 12 below. Zambia has seen significant growth in remittance inflows over the years, as has been the case for other developing nations. Inflows increased from approximately USD 61.5 million in 2012 to approximately USD 87.05 million in 2018 (DFA Report, 2022).

Improvement in the system of recording remittances in 2020 explains the larger volume of transactions captured. In addition, Zambia's small size of remittances could be attributed to several factors such as a small diaspora population as well as a relatively unskilled domestic workforce resulting in a small population of Zambians working abroad. The Government recognises the significant contribution of the Zambian diaspora to national development, including their significant remittance contributions, as reflected in the Seventh and Eighth National



Figure 12: Remittances, FDI and ODA Flows to Low- and Middle-Income Countries (excluding China)

Source: Adopted from the World Bank-KNOMAD Policy Brief Report, 2021

Development Plans developed in 2017 and 2022, respectively. Accordingly, the Government, with support from the UN, formulated a National Diaspora Policy to support the engagement and participation of the Zambian diaspora in national development. To operationalise the National Diaspora Policy effectively and sustainably, the Government established a Diaspora Coordination Desk, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2019.

Given the recent global shocks and declining trends in financial flows, Zambia must seek more stable and sustainable sources of financing going forward as opposed to reliance on assistance. The Government must intensify debt restructuring efforts and strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks around debt contraction. Alternative and cheaper sources of financing such as public-private partnerships must also be embraced. Furthermore, for more ODA to flow to Zambia, the Government must align its developmental objectives to match the finance windows that promote global developmental goals as well as initiate pilot projects, especially under climate change.

6.4 Debt Situation

In 2020, Zambia became the first low-income nation to default on its Eurobond debt and halted approximately USD 42.5 million of debt repayment on its USD 3 billion Eurobond. The mounting pressure on the default forced the Government to engage with its creditors as well as bond holders requesting a debt payment holiday. Under the G20 Common Framework, the country secured through the International Monitoring Fund (IMF) a 38-month Extended Credit Facility providing the country with access to Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 138.88 million (approximately USD 189 million). The agreement set pace for Zambia to negotiate its outstanding debt amounting to USD 6.3 billion with its official bilateral creditors.

The IMF's SDR and the Extended Credit Facility bailout package of USD 1.3 billion in 2022 resulted in an increase in international reserves from 2.4 months of import cover in 2021 to 3.6 months in August 2022. As a percentage of GDP, the country's external debt has been reduced from 112.3 percent in 2021 to 100.6 percent in 2022. The reduction in the country's external debt comes because of the several initiatives it has implemented under the G20 Common Framework which precedes the debt service suspension initiative.



However, public domestic debt has significantly increased in the recent years from ZMW 51.8 billion in 2016 to ZMW 76.4 billion as of June 2022. This increase was driven by increased national external debt service, higher borrowing requirements mainly to finance the FISP, refinancing of fuel arrears and partly due to increased budget financing requirements; given the limited resource envelope and as a proportion of GDP, domestic debt increased to 45.2 percent in 2022 compared to 21.2 percent in 2018.

The country's debt stock as of December 2023 stood at USD 14.2 billion, hence the need to enhance debt management capabilities by tightening and strengthening the country's debt management frameworks to avoid accumulating additional and unwarranted debts which could have negative effects on the country's economic growth.

6.5 Illicit Financial Flows in Zambia

Illicit financial flows (IFFs) undermine the ability of countries to fully benefit from national economic activities as financial resources are siphoned out illegally and this deprives governments from getting additional sources to finance development. The illicit flow of resources from economies is one of the major challenges facing the African continent. The continent loses an estimated USD 89 billion dollars annually due to IFFs of which 65 percent of this value originates from commercial activities. This illicit outflow of financial resources occurs through, among others, transfer pricing; mis-invoicing; inefficient taxation systems; tax evasion; non-declaration of cash at national exit points; and abusive tax avoidance.

Strengthening the taxation system is one of the methods of curbing the illicit outflow of resources from countries. In 2023, the Zambian Government introduced progressive marginal tax rates for the mineral royalty tax and reintroduced its deductibility from corporate income tax, with the objective of strengthening the taxation system and minimising

revenue losses in the mining sector (Zambia National Budget, 2023). However, the efficiency of the regimes relies on the accuracy of the invoicing system which can be manipulated to understate the taxable income and thus result in profit-shifting. Furthermore, despite the provisions against transfer pricing under Section 97 of the Income Tax Act, transfer pricing persists and is undermined by the global nature of this IFF strategy, which requires international cooperation and can only be curtailed through international collaboration which often is not forthcoming.

The Government, through the Zambia Revenue Authority has introduced institutional and legal mechanisms to fight tax evasion and financial crimes including establishment of a dedicated investigations unit that targets countering tax evasion practices and prosecuting such offences. In addition, given the transnational nature of IFFs, the Government has strengthened cooperation and collaboration across national and international boundaries. To further strengthen the system, in 2022 Zambia launched the National Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism and Proliferation Financing Policy which set the parameters for the effective combating of money laundering.

The country has established an institutional framework to deal with IFFs including the Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AML) which is mandated to provide policy direction and the National Task Force of Senior Officials on the AML, which coordinates anti-laundering matters. Furthermore, Zambia joined the Egmont Group, a platform to exchange information and knowledge on IFFs which helps foster cooperation among member financial intelligence units across the world.

Despite the national efforts and the intervention of international efforts, illicit financial flows remain a major challenge to Africa's development. For Zambia, building capacity to monitor and address IFFs remains key to ensuring that these detrimental flows are curtailed or curbed.

7



CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDGs





With only a few years before the deadline for achieving the SDGs, many countries, including Zambia are facing challenges to meet the agreed targets. For Zambia, the challenges include: the debt crisis; disease outbreaks and emergency preparedness; macroeconomic instability; climate change; dependency on mining and rain-fed agriculture; data analysis and disaggregation; and geo-political shifts.

7.1 Debt Crisis

Zambia had been in debt distress since the late 1980s, which resulted in debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative in 2005. Despite this relief, the country's debt-to-GDP ratio more than doubled from approximately 22 percent in 2011 to 56 percent in 2018 clearly illustrating that debt relief under the HIPC initiative did not result in the desired high economic growth.

Increasing and unsustainable debt is a source of great concern for the country which continues to impact on its development agenda and the living conditions of many people. The country continues to face major macroeconomic and social impacts of the debt situation in the past years, including increasing levels of poverty; unstable exchange rates; high inflation rates; and decreased levels of budget allocation in key sectors, among others.

The country has a serious burden due to limited access to financing; rising borrowing costs; currency devaluations; sluggish growth; high debt servicing; tackling climate change; and investing in critical sectors. Furthermore, high debt levels have left the country in a precarious financial position, putting more pressure on its fiscal space and eroding its ability to meet its obligations.

The country reached agreement with its creditors on debt restructuring, which is a key milestone. The agreement will unlock resources for domestic

investments and social programmes, fostering economic growth and poverty reduction in line with the aspirations of the 8NDP. Through the extended maturities and reduced interest payments, resources have been expanded and national resources freed for allocation to critical sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure development.

7.2 Disease Outbreaks and Emergency Preparedness

Pandemics such as COVID-19 and the seasonal cholera outbreaks, cause both short and long-term fiscal impact on the economy. The economic impacts of COVID-19 for example were especially severe in the country as many households and firms were ill-prepared to withstand a large-scale income shock. Over the past five years, the Ministry of Health has declared several cholera outbreaks, signifying it as an increasingly persistent public health challenge. The cholera outbreaks are further compounded by extreme climate events such as seasonal floods, flash floods, and the El Niño phenomenon which have occurred with a steady increase in both frequency and intensity in the country over the last decade.

The country which was already burdened with unsustainable levels of debt struggled to service this debt, while associated public health measures and extreme climate events led to a sharp decline in income and business revenue. The result was an immediate impact on the country's poverty and inequality levels; poverty increased and disproportionate income losses among disadvantaged populations led to an increase in inequality. Due to being landlinked, there is also potential regional threat from cross-border transmissions between Zambia and its eight neighbouring countries. When outbreaks occur in these countries, the cross-border linkages highlight the interconnectedness of the regions, posing further challenges to containment efforts.





Furthermore, there is a close linkage between cross-border trade (migration) and HIV. Migration is a social determinant of health and the interconnection between mobility and health can positively or negatively affect both migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination. Providing accessible and quality preventive and curative health services to migrants and their families benefits not just the people directly cared for, but also the communities along the mobility continuum, serving as a key public health measure against the spread of transmittable diseases. Failing to access health services for reasons directly related to migration, such as lack of official documents, fear of being arrested, economic barriers or lack of time to seek healthcare can result in people remaining untreated and potentially putting at risk the health of others.

7.3 Macroeconomic Instability

The Zambian economy continues to show positive growth despite various challenges impacting key sectors of the economy. However, the country is facing macroeconomic instability with several indicators such as inflation, exchange rates and prices, among others, which poses a major challenge to the promotion of private-sector-led inclusive growth.

Restoring macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability are critical in attracting private sector capital inflows, investment, and economic growth and the BoZ has a critical role for this to happen. A country with a stable macroeconomic environment enjoys positive growth, low and stable inflation, low commodity prices, low interest rates, and minimal volatility in the exchange rate. These outcomes could be achieved only if the Government is well-disciplined in maintaining and aligning monetary and fiscal policies.

The Government is committed to implement measures to bring about increased growth, reduce inflation, interest rates, and fiscal deficits and to build a sustainable external sector that will stabilise

the exchange rate. In support of the Government's efforts to improve macroeconomic stability, the World Bank, through the IDA, approved the second operation in a programmatic series aimed at helping Zambia restore macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability and promote private-sector-led growth. A total grant amounting to USD 125 million was approved.

7.4 Climate Change

Zambia, like other countries in the SADC region, has been experiencing adverse impacts of climate change, ranging from seasonal droughts, dry spells in most parts of the country, increased temperatures, and floods, all of which have led to human displacements, migration, and loss of livestock. As outlined above, key sectors most affected by climate change include agriculture, road infrastructure, and energy. In the absence of mitigation policies, climate change has an adverse effect on real growth outputs for the country. Climate change is primarily affecting the agriculture sector, particularly due to seasonal dry spells. Climate change is also affecting the mining sector because of its high demand on energy. The sector remains the biggest consumer of power which takes up approximately 51 percent of total generated electricity, followed by the domestic sector at 33 percent (MoE website).

Although the country has been experiencing dry spells, this has also been associated with heavy rainfall and thunderstorms, affecting several parts of the country and which often lead to internal displacements and migration in search of better conditions. In 2023, floods impacted particularly Southern, Central, Eastern, and Lusaka Provinces, which resulted in severe damage to many houses, livestock, bridges and other infrastructure, further leaving many families without access to healthcare and education. These challenges are straining Government resources meant for the implementation of the national development agenda.



7.5 Dependency on Mining

The Zambian economy continues to be exposed to external shocks due to its heavy dependence on copper mining and rain-fed agricultural production. The variances in global prices of copper and other minerals continue to fluctuate, negatively affecting the Zambian economy. The mining industry contributes approximately 70 percent of Zambia's total export value and nearly 20 percent of Government revenues. Although the Government has been pursuing economic diversification to reduce the country's reliance on copper exports, this has not progressed as expected. More needs to be done to accelerate the process and exploit other sources of growth, including agriculture, manufacturing, services, and tourism.

Although the Government is trying to put in place a conducive environment and good governance, the uncertainties in the mining industry continue to rise as production is highly driven by global demand. The country saw 2021 copper production figures drop to 800,696 MT from 837,996 MT in 2020, mainly due to fluctuations in global demand as well as operational challenges arising from lack of recapitalisation due to an unattractive mining tax regime. With these uncertainties, the call for diversification to other sectors is not an option but a necessity.

7.6 Data Analytics, Disaggregation and Dissemination

Data is essential for the identification of challenges and their solutions in the implementation and monitoring of the national development agenda including the 8NDP and SDGs. In Zambia, the monitoring of 8NDP and SDGs is led by the MoFNP with support from the partners including the UN. Data is provided by the ZamStats, which is mandated to carry out national surveys on behalf of the Government.

The country also faces a high demand for data to support evidence-based programming to support the achievement of the SDGs. Analysis of the data ecosystem shows that the country has gaps in data processes that should be supported and resourced. Given the breadth and complexity of the 8NDP and SDGs, different types of data are required (demographic, economic, social, environmental) with varying levels of coverage, disaggregation, analytics and dissemination. A solid framework of indicators and statistical data to monitor progress and to inform policy and ensure accountability of all stakeholders is imperative.

In 2023, the Government conducted the country's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, the debt situation and climate change effects. The report did not cover all the SDGs due to non-availability of data²⁸. This amplifies the need to strengthen the national statistics analytics and dissemination.

7.7 Geo-Political Shifts

Zambia continues to be affected by multiple and intersecting geo-political shifts and challenges, which affect the price of goods, services, and the cost of living in the country and the region. Global economic, climate, and political crises have been known to cause ripple effects across the world, impacting global markets and transit routes for goods, while wars and conflicts have escalated global humanitarian, refugee, and migration crises. A further concern for Zambia includes shifting donor priorities and increased global insecurities that have been triggered by global and regional politics.

²⁸ The 2023 VNR focused on the progress made on the SDGs between 2019 and 2022 and highlights the key challenges the country is facing. The review reports on SDGs 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, and 17 but does not report on 1, 2, 14, and 16; this was largely due to the delayed release of key country statistics such as the 2022 LCMS and delayed undertaking of the Household Budget Survey, and the Enterprise Survey.



8



CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION





The 2024 CCA provides an update on Zambia's sustainable development context, highlighting progress made since the 2021 report, as well as the national, regional and global challenges that need to be addressed towards attainment of the SDGs. The report indicates that while the country continues to address its pre-existing challenges, it is still off-track in addressing its key challenges, and new challenges have emerged. The gaps to be addressed have been articulated in the report. The report also indicates that since the 2021 report, in the various sectors, several new policies, legislation, and programmes have been instituted to address pre-existing and new challenges and gaps.

In 2024, the country's major challenges include high poverty levels; food insecurity and unemployment rates, particularly for the youth; heavy dependency on copper and rain-fed agriculture; a debt burden; recurring disease outbreaks; natural disasters, climate change and governance challenges.

Among the areas of progress are that Zambia has considerably enhanced its social protection mechanisms against poverty. Notably, the 2024 allocations for social protection programmes have been significantly increased.

By early 2024, the Government had made appreciable progress in addressing the debt crisis, through reaching agreement with its creditors on debt restructuring. Also, the Government has embarked on measures to empower the youth, including the development in 2023 of the National Youth Strategy, to address the high youth unemployment levels. In addition, the country has made advances in the mitigation of economic losses from impacts of climate change, by integrating climate change into policies and programmes to support a low carbon and climate-resilient development pathway. Further, several strategic frameworks and instruments have been developed, to achieve a green economy.

In 2022, the Government introduced the Education for All and the Free Education policies which resulted in major increases in school enrolment. There has also been significant increased investment in education infrastructure and human resources.

Neonatal mortality has declined from 27 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018, to an estimated 25 in 2021. Further, there has been a decline in HIV incidence and prevalence.

To address the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, some progress has been recorded in managing disaster risk reduction through the establishment of various institutions and legal and policy frameworks, but much remains to be done.

Among key areas of concern are that while the economy grew at an average rate of 5.7 percent between 2021 and 2023, in 2024 the GDP is projected at 4.9 percent, which is below the national target of 6-8 percent. In addition to the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020, since 2023 there has been a further threat due to an unprecedented and prolonged cholera outbreak.

Poverty levels have continued to increase, from 54.4 percent in 2015 to 60 percent in 2022. The country has not made much progress in reducing the prevalence of hunger and remains unlikely to achieve SDG 2. In 2023 the country's hunger situation is classified as serious.

Despite a few successes, there still exists wide gender inequality.

The UN and other partners have continued to strategically provide both technical and financial support to Zambia in several sectors, in its efforts towards attainment of the SDGs. This support is vital for the country's progress in addressing challenges in, and barriers to, the country's socio-economic development.





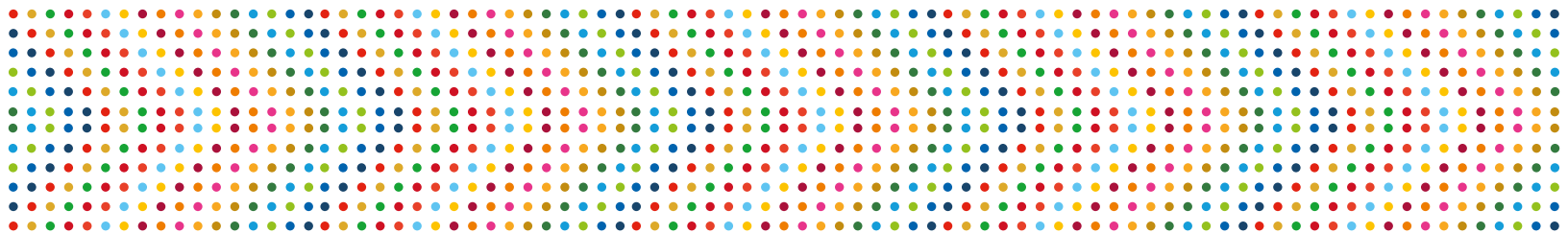
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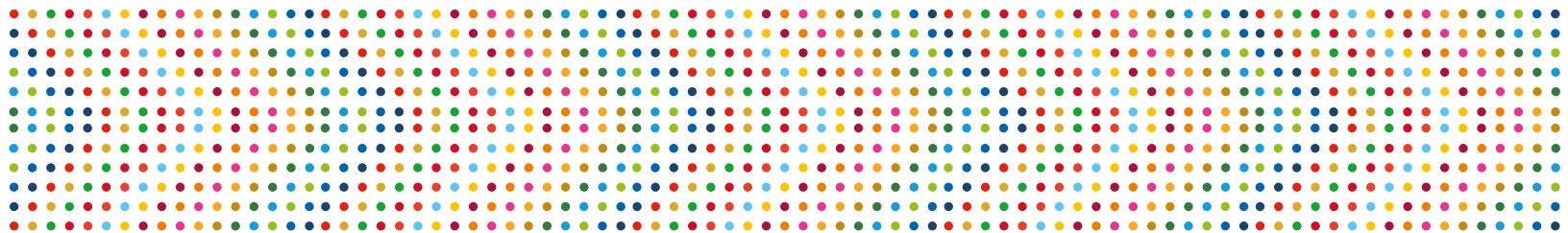
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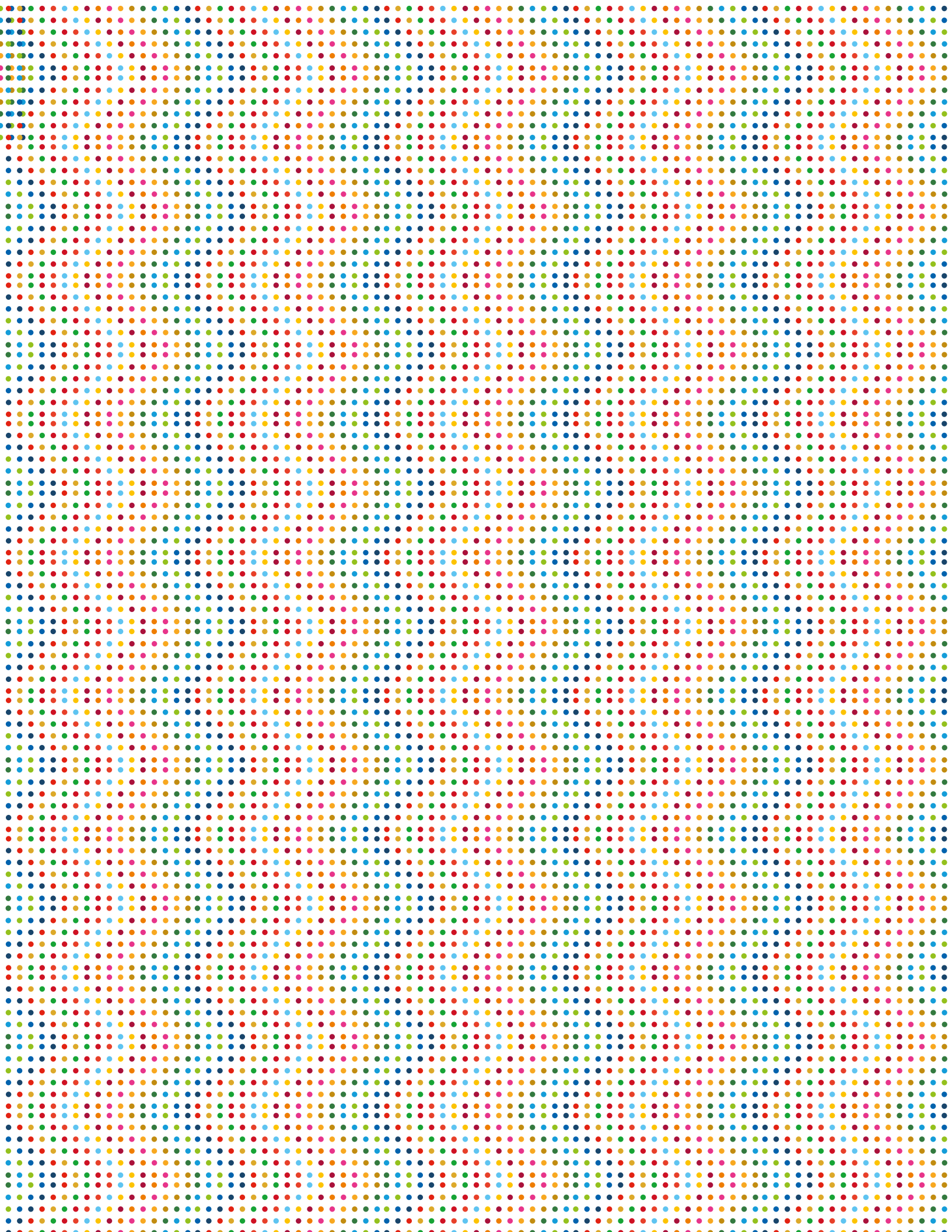


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