



UNITED NATIONS  
ZAMBIA



# NEWSLETTER

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# FOREWORD

BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR



As we end 2024, we reflect on a period of remarkable progress and collaboration, marked by initiatives aimed at improving lives, strengthening resilience, and driving sustainable development across Zambia.

Our UN Zambia newsletter captures the essence of the collective efforts from various partners and UN agencies in addressing some of the country's most pressing challenges, from tackling drought to fostering innovation and inclusivity.

We celebrate significant milestones, including the generous \$20 million donation from USAID BHA towards the drought response and the launch of innovative irrigation solutions that are bringing hope to drought-affected regions. We highlight the launch of Zambia's Human Development Report 2023/24 and the first round of the nOPV2 campaign that successfully vaccinated over 2 million children against polio. As Zambia looks to a more sustainable future, the introduction of Green Bonds and the collaboration with stakeholders to develop an Agriculture Skills Strategy mark key steps forward.

Empowerment and inclusion are at the heart of our mission. From solar installation training and equipping entrepreneurs with disabilities for economic independence, we are fostering new opportunities for growth and self-sufficiency. We also support community resilience through interventions such as the SCRALA project's.

This edition also Spotlights Zambia's participation in shaping global narratives at the Summit of the Future, where communities are empowered, and futures are protected. In this issue you will also read about our efforts towards a more inclusive media landscape through our Disability-Inclusive Reporting initiative.

As you read through this edition, we invite you to engage with these stories that reflect our commitment to leaving no one behind and building a future that benefits all Zambians.

**Happy reading!**

**Beatrice Mutali**  
**UN Resident Coordinator**



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Photo Focus



## USAID BHA DONATES \$20 MILLION TOWARDS DROUGHT RESPONSE



In response to the Drought Response Food security humanitarian appeals by the Government and UN, the United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA) donated \$20 million to the Government of Zambia through World Food Programme (WFP), targeting to support 600,000 beneficiaries in drought-affected regions.

During the event in Lusaka, Zambia's Vice President, Mrs. W.K. Mutale Nalumango, thanked the U.S. government for its vital support amidst the El Niño-induced drought affecting nearly six million people. She expressed gratitude to the people of the United States for their timely assistance, acknowledging the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis.

U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Michael Gonzales, reiterated the U.S. government's support for Zambia's recovery from drought, pledging ongoing assistance to those in need and expressing pride in being a committed partner in Zambia's pursuit of economic growth and food security. WFP Country Director Cissy Kabasuuga highlighted how the donation has enhanced their response efforts. "This funding enables us to provide vital assistance to the most affected individuals. We aim to work closely with the government and other humanitarian organisations to ensure a united and effective response."

For affected communities, the aid is already making a difference. Njai Matomola, a beneficiary from Nalolo district in Western Province, expressed relief upon receiving a 50 kg bag of Maize and 10 kg of beans, saying, "This support brings us hope during these difficult times." WFP's response, supported by USAID BHA, includes distributing food and cash assistance and providing agricultural support. The intervention will focus on areas in the Western, Southern, Eastern, and Central provinces severely affected by drought, where extensive crop failure has led to a crisis affecting millions.

The El Niño-induced drought has significantly impacted the 2023/2024 agricultural season, which has led to extensive crop damage and a humanitarian crisis affecting over 6 million people in 84 districts in Zambia after the president declared a national disaster.



# Echoes of Drought: UN, French Ambassador, and WFP visit Zambia's Drought-Affected Communities



To observe the effects of the El Niño-induced drought and gain insights into how smallholder farmers have been affected during the 2023–2024 farming season, a high-level delegation led by the World Food Programme (WFP) visited Gwembe District in Southern Zambia. The mission also included understanding WFP's resilience programmes and the implementation of the Home-Grown School Meals programme.

The delegation, led by WFP Zambia Country Director Cissy Kabasuuga, included United Nations Resident Coordinator Beatrice Mutali and French Ambassador to Zambia Thomas Rossignol. The visit started with a courtesy call on Gwembe District Commissioner Killian Chikandula, who thanked the delegation for visiting a drought-affected area like his district. He acknowledged the anticipated crucial assistance from the United Nations through the World Food Programme during these challenging times.

Additionally, the delegation met with Annette Mutinta, a smallholder farmer who demonstrated conservation agriculture techniques she learnt through the WFP-Ministry of Agriculture-Rural Resilience Initiative. Mutinta shared how the drought had affected her food security and savings, leading her to sell handmade baskets to sustain herself.

A focus group discussion followed, involving smallholder farmers from Lukonde Agricultural Camp and members of the Tuyandaule Savings group, who described their challenges with the ongoing drought. The delegation also met Godfrey, a rain gauge minder who collects and shares climate and weather data with other farmers, assisting them in making informed choices amid unpredictable weather patterns.

Furthermore, the team visited Gwembe Primary School, which provides meals to 1,027 learners, via the Home-Grown School Meals programme. They took time to appreciate presentations from learners on how the hydroponic gardens and sack farming technology is aiding their agriculture science skills. WFP Zambia Country Director Kabasuuga informed the delegation that the school is one of 48 schools benefiting from the hydroponic garden technology constructed by WFP with support from German Development Bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW).

Ambassador Thomas Rossignol commended WFP for the hydroponic garden construction, which aims to produce fresh vegetables, enhance nutrition knowledge, and generate income for the school amidst the climate crisis.

United Nations Resident Coordinator Beatrice Mutali reiterated the importance of resilience in dealing with climate crisis challenges. "Climate change is here to stay," she said, "and we all must support communities to build the capacity to withstand its impacts."

The 2023/2024 agricultural season has been severely affected by the El Niño-induced drought. As a result, there has been extensive crop damage and a humanitarian crisis impacting over 6 million people across 84 districts in Zambia following the president's declaration of a national disaster.





# Tackling Water Scarcity with Innovative Irrigation Solutions



UNDP and the Ministry of Agriculture coalition, under the SCRALA project, is enhancing climate resilience among smallholder farmers by implementing irrigation systems in Zambia. "Planting crops such as maize, groundnuts, and soya beans has been a nightmare here in Chirundu district due to prolonged drought periods that we have been facing.

Our crops were all affected by the 2023/24 drought, and with the small amount of maize that I harvested, it is clear that it will not be enough to sustain my family throughout the year. These are the words of Rosemary, a 60-year-old mother of seven who is a smallholder farmer in Chirundu, a district located in Zambia's Agro-Ecological Region I, characterized by extremely high temperatures.

She is among the six million farmers in Zambia whose lives and farming practices have been disrupted by the 2023/24 drought caused by El Niño–Southern Oscillation. I met her during the recent launch of the irrigation scheme in Chirundu district under the Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II in Zambia (SCRALA) project, where firsthand accounts revealed the profound impact of climate change on people's lives.

Another smallholder farmer, Benson, from the district, explained that he could no longer harvest crops such as maize and groundnuts due to insufficient rainfall in the region. This shortage has led to reduced meals for his family, posing serious issues of malnutrition for his children.

In Zambia, the majority of rural communities depend on rain-fed agriculture. However, erratic weather patterns, such as drought, often lead to significant crop damage and

livestock losses. Food security remains a pressing issue, with approximately 40% of children under five stunted and 60% of the population living below the poverty line, according to the World Bank.

In my interactions with such smallholder farmers, it is evident that Zambia has not escaped the ravages of climate change. These effects have disrupted the livelihoods of millions, who struggle to grow enough food or sell surplus produce due to erratic rainfall as well as prolonged and frequent drought. This underscores the urgent need to assist farmers in adapting to the widespread effects of climate change by enhancing their capacities to adjust to evolving climate conditions. In Zambia, adapting to these impacts has become essential.

In response to the challenges posed by climate change, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is collaborating on implementing the SCRALA project, an intervention that is enhancing water access for small-holder farmers.

The SCRALA project constructed a 20-hectare solar-powered drip irrigation scheme in Tauya village, Chirundu district. This community-driven initiative was officially handed over to the local community on 7 June 2024 by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Mtolo Phiri, in order to address the challenges farmers are facing. For the beneficiary community, this day marked the beginning of a transformative journey towards improved food production and household incomes.

This scheme will change our living standards, and we are indeed grateful because we are assured of several sources of income

and enough food for our children in our homes, also, since we have been trained in its management as a cooperative, we will ensure it is put to good use.

Journeying through the fields where climate change meets innovation, I witnessed how the SCRALA project is turning the tide with groundbreaking irrigation systems among farmers - Theresa Kinkese, SCRALA Project Manager

The initiative is set to be a model for replication across the 16 districts where the project is implemented to promote a shock-responsive, risk-informed, and inclusive society, aligning with Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), and Sustainable Development Goals on Zero Hunger, No Poverty and Climate Action while leaving no one behind.

Through this Green Climate Fund (GCF) financed climate resilient agriculture project, the government with cooperating partners have come together to propel Zambia's economy while protecting people and the environment from climate shocks, reducing food shortages, promoting alternative livelihoods as well as contributing to the aspirations of the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

The SCRALA project receives additional technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA) and Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD).



## DESPERATE DRYNESS: IOM INTENSIFIES AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS TO RESPOND TO ZAMBIA'S WORST DROUGHT IN FOUR DECADES



Zambia is currently grappling with the most severe drought in over forty years, an ordeal that has left over 6.5 million people facing dire consequences. The late onset of rains and prolonged dry spells associated with the El Niño phenomenon have devastated crop and pasture production across the nation, impacting the lives of approximately 11 million farming households. This natural calamity has pushed communities to the brink, with vast swathes of maize fields reduced to dust and pasturelands parched beyond recognition.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has joined forces with the Zambian government and the United Nations to tackle this crisis head-on. IOM Zambia, under the African Regional Migration Program (ARMP), is strengthening the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) in the worst-hit provinces: Western, Southern, and Eastern. This collaborative effort aims to bolster early warning systems (EWS) and empower local communities to better prepare for and respond to such calamities in the future.

"The drought has not only destroyed crops but also diminished pasture for livestock and wildlife, drying up surface water sources crucial for irrigation and daily needs," Keisha Livermore, Chief of Mission, IOM Zambia. "Our goal is to equip these communities with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to navigate this crisis and future challenges effectively," she said.

In Zambia's central, southern and western regions, where the drought hit hardest during critical growth phases for maize, the staple crop, farmers like Cosmas Sin'gandu have watched their fields turn barren. "This season was our hope, but now it's nothing but dry

land," she lamented. "We need support to survive and rebuild."

The statistics are stark: 982,765 hectares of maize, nearly half of the country's total maize cultivation, have been decimated. This loss is not only a blow to food security but also threatens to plunge the country into a power deficit of 430 Megawatts, as over 80% of Zambia's electricity is generated from hydropower.

Compounding these issues, the drought is exacerbating vulnerabilities among women and children, heightening the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation, and abuse. The scarcity of essential resources and weakened social safety nets are forcing communities into desperate measures, including early marriages, transactional sex, and child labor.

The UN's response, coordinated through the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and various UN agencies, includes a Multi-hazard Preparedness and Response Plan. This plan not only addresses the immediate needs of the affected populations but also lays the groundwork for sustainable solutions to mitigate the long-term impacts of climate change and recurring droughts. IOM's initiatives include awareness raising campaigns and capacity building workshops for community members and government staff under the DMMU and the Ministry of Agriculture in disaster-prone communities, focusing on developing coping strategies to combat GBV and strengthening local civil protection structures. The aim is to prepare communities for future disasters, ensuring they have durable solutions and a robust

action plan in place.

As the drought continues to grip Zambia, the collective efforts of the government, IOM, and other UN system offer a beacon of hope. These initiatives underscore the importance of resilience and preparedness in the face of climatic adversities. "Together, we can build a more resilient Zambia, capable of weathering the storms of climate change," Ms. Livermore affirmed.





## Green Bonds – A New Frontier in Zambia’s Sustainable Path

BIOFIN Zambia works with partners to catalyze investment towards an economically prosperous and climate secure Zambia.

The operative word change, in Climate Change, informs us of the shifting and unpredictable nature of the phenomenon that continues to characterise daily life for many across the world.

As a result, combatting the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss and promoting adaptation calls for equally innovative and dynamic approaches that have the capacity to evolve with our changing environments, and even pre-empt climate and nature related shocks and disasters. Green Bonds are one such intervention which offers investors an avenue to pour financing into projects that directly address the shifting concerns and needs of communities and areas affected by climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.

In 2023, 15 years after the first Green Bond was issued by the World Bank, Zambia joined the green financing revolution, issuing its first ever green bond. These green bonds are the vehicle upon which Zambia can transform its approach to enhancing environmentally positive activities and initiatives and its response to climate and nature related shocks, like the ongoing drought caused by El Niño.

Aside from the fact that green bonds directly address climate change and enhance efforts to tackle climate and nature related risks and scale the implementation of adaptative measures, Green Bonds also stimulate financial investment in the country – making it

possible to support Zambia’s economic development goals, all while offsetting the impact of climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss in the region. Analysts expect the global green bond market to be worth between \$4.7 trillion and \$5.6 trillion by 2035. Zambia is currently tapping into this market in the early adoption phase, ensuring that its position in the growing market is continuously strengthened.

UNDP’s Biodiversity Finance Initiative in Zambia (BIOFIN Zambia) is working hand in hand with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, and other members of the Green Finance Mainstreaming Working Group to create an enabling environment that would enhance the utilisation of green bonds in Zambia by addressing market challenges and providing targeted support to scale development efforts in Zambia’s green bond market.

On a visit to the Copperbelt Energy Cooperation Limited (CEC) in Kitwe, the issuer of Zambia’s debut green bond, the BIOFIN Zambia team and its partners engaged key stakeholders to gain insights on the experiences, challenges, and bottlenecks that CEC faced during and after the green bond was issued.

The mission revealed a need for enhanced awareness among potential investors to educate them on the available opportunities for growth in the sector. Further investigations highlighted the need to refine existing regulatory frameworks

through collaboration with regulatory bodies – leading to the establishment of clear guidelines and governance standards that will ensure transparency in green bond practices and mitigate the risk of greenwashing.

Moreover, advocating for economic stability measures, improving credit ratings, and enhancing market infrastructure will be essential to facilitating a conducive environment for sustainable green investments in Zambia. Through addressing these issues, the Green Finance Mainstreaming Working Group will establish a robust green bond market that attracts diverse investments, promote environmental sustainability, and contribute to long-term economic growth in the country.

Although notable positive achievements have been observed from this landmark initiative, BIOFIN Zambia will continue to partner with Government agencies, financial sector regulators, investors, private sector bodies and other key stakeholders, to further explore the opportunities and challenges in developing Zambia’s green bond market, and to catalyse increased investments in a climate and nature secure future for the country and its people. Bruno Mweemba, the Senior Technical Advisor on Environmental Finance for the African Region noted that,

**Green Bonds in Zambia signify a pivotal shift towards sustainable finance, harnessing global capital to fortify our environment and economy against the uncertainties of climate change and biodiversity loss.**





## ILO and KGRTC launch solar installation training

Zambia continues to grapple with the impact of the El Nino drought which has had a significant impact on the energy sector among others. The country heavily relies on hydroelectric power which accounts for about 85 percent of installed generation capacity, and the drought has greatly reduced water levels in reservoir dams, leading to severe decrease in electricity generation.

To support this transition, the government approved net metering, and the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) has sanctioned a tariff for Zesco. This shift has led to a surge in the adoption of solar systems, but there is a notable shortage of skilled manpower to design, install, and maintain these systems.

To mitigate this gap, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) have launched a week-long solar photovoltaic (PV) system design and installation training to Micro-Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and other private players in the energy sector across the country. Thus far, over 1,000 participants from Lusaka, Kitwe, Solwezi, Kabwe, Kasama, Mansa, Chinsali, Chipata, Livingstone, Mongu and districts have graduated after completing the training.

The ILO with funding from the Swedish Government with its implementing partner, KGRTC has been implementing the Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project from January 2021 to December 2024.

So far, the ILO and KGRTC have developed 26 courses in renewable energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy integration, marking a significant contribution to skills development in the energy sector. These courses have

benefited 700 engineers, technicians, and energy managers of which 35 percent of are females. The project further has improved visibility and user engagement through the development of KGRTC's new website and e-Campus platform.

The first cohort for the solar training saw 47 participants graduating at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) Main Campus on 24 August 2024. KGRTC has partnered with selected Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as well as other learning institutions countrywide to conduct the solar trainings.

Officiating at the event, Ministry of Energy, Permanent Secretary- Administration Dr Francesca Chisangano Zyambo said the training was essential to Zambia's strategy to diversify its energy mix and reducing dependency on hydropower.

"The installed solar capacity stands at over 200 Megawatts, a figure that needs substantial growth to meet the energy demands. The deployment of solar PV systems, particularly in commercial buildings, can play a crucial role in reducing grid dependency, lowering energy costs, and mitigating the impacts of load shedding," said Dr Zyambo, in a speech read on her behalf by Ministry of Energy Director for Human Resource and Administration, Mr Titus Mwewa.

Meanwhile, SESA Project Chief Technical Advisor Dr Lloyd Ngo called for forward-looking skills strategies to train young people and reskill the current workforce to

meet the skills needs for new jobs generated in the just-energy transition process.

"This year, we have witnessed worst drought in history which has greatly impacted energy supply. In respond, the government has responded by encouraging alternative sources of energy including solar PV system. As such, we have seen a surge in the update of solar products. Without the right skills we are likely to face a backlash and technology failure in the next few years," said Dr Ngo.

Meanwhile, KGRTC Executive Director Davies Chinkusu said the training would help mitigate the effects of drought-induced power deficits. "It is our sincere hope that after undergoing this training the graduates will be able to design, install, operate and maintain solar PV systems in commercial buildings and residential buildings, thereby helping to mitigate the effects of the drought-induced power shortage that the nation is grappling with," said Mr. Chinkusu.



## SCRALA Project Launches Tauya Irrigation Scheme Amidst Drought Crisis in Zambia

The Green Climate Funded SCRALA project is empowering small-scale farmers by promoting food security and income generation.

In Zambia, the impact of climate change on smallholder farmers has been longstanding, given their reliance on rain-fed agriculture for sustenance. This dependency has rendered them particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in weather patterns, disrupting agricultural production and consequently jeopardizing their livelihoods. Smallholder farmers, livestock keepers, and community members relying on natural water sources and shallow wells are among the hardest hit by these climatic changes.

The 2018/2019 rainy season was especially harsh, with severe drought affecting 2.3 million people and exacerbating food insecurity by driving up food prices due to reduced agricultural yields. Subsequent rainy seasons saw a continuation of adverse weather patterns, marked by insufficient rainfall in many regions alongside flooding.

During the 2023/2024 rainy season, the situation has escalated and is now affecting over 1 million households. The repercussions have been dire, with approximately 1 million hectares of maize fields damaged out of the 2.2 million hectares that were planted. As a result, an estimated 2.04 million individuals are facing heightened food insecurity.

To address these challenges, the Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II in Zambia (SCRALA) project has implemented a solar-powered drip irrigation scheme in Tauya village. Launched on June 7, 2024, this community irrigation system spanning 12 hectares constructed at a cost of One Hundred Seventy-Nine Thousand United States Dollars (USD\$179,000) will benefit over 45 households, of which 25 are female-headed households.

"What we see today here in Chirundu is very good and must be replicated in many other parts of the country where we have water challenges. Agriculture is the way to go and a key solution to prosperity for Zambia and even for individual farmers who are ready to step in," said Mr. Reuben Mtolo Phiri- Honourable Minister

of Agriculture during the launch and handover ceremony.

These efforts are expected to yield significant improvements in water accessibility, particularly in regions susceptible to drought, such as Chirundu district. Despite being situated along the banks of the Kafue River, the district faces frequent droughts, exacerbating water scarcity in the agriculture camp, which is further intensified by the lack of motorized pumps for water extraction and ongoing threats from crocodiles.

"This scheme not only promotes access to water for increased agriculture production but also demonstrates the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices, through harnessing sustainable innovations such as solar energy and drip irrigation for efficient resource utilization that can be scaled up in other drought-affected areas throughout the country. It also demonstrates diversification in agriculture to safeguard the livelihoods and incomes of our communities," said Mr. James Wakiaga - United Nations Development Programme in Zambia's Resident Representative during the event.

The project has also provided farmers with over 1,900 banana suckers, planted across 1.5 hectares. The cultivation of these cash crops, alongside maize, holds great promise for boosting both income and food security within the community. Collaborating closely with the government and partner organizations, the local community is actively driving development initiatives. The banana plants, initially planted in January 2024, have successfully taken root and are expected to be ready for harvest by December 2024.

To ensure the scheme's sustainability, the project has trained members in managing the irrigation system effectively and seizing market opportunities. Farmers have also received training in cooperative management and financial literacy, promoting sustainable farming practices and fostering economic growth within the community.

Beyond water infrastructure, the project empowers farmers with conservation agriculture knowledge, provides agricultural inputs and technical expertise, offers weather information, alternative livelihoods, financial skills training, and market access. This holistic strategy enhances the livelihoods and overall well-being of farmers.

Given the widespread drought conditions across Zambia, this solar-powered drip irrigation system has the potential to serve as a model for similar projects nationwide, enhancing food security and income generation.

The SCRALA project is jointly funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by the MoA with technical support from the World Food Programme (WFP), Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA), and the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD).



## Equipping Entrepreneurs with Disabilities to Attain Economic Independence

Zambia has about 2 million Persons with Disabilities. They represent a significant portion of the population with untapped potential to accelerate development efforts in the country. However, persons with disabilities in the country find it difficult to access employment, with very few industries and companies offering employment for job-seeking persons with disabilities.

"Employment is quite scarce to persons with disabilities because majority of the employment that we see in Zambia is just about teaching. We would like [persons with disabilities] to also explore other areas", shares Clement Chanda, the Provincial Disability Focal Point for Central Province. Many persons with disabilities face an increased risk of experiencing poverty as a result of the limited career options open to them in Zambia.

To enhance economic independence amongst persons with disabilities, UNDP – through the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Social Protection – partnered with the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), National Trust Fund for Persons with Disabilities (NTD), Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, to implement a training programme that aims to equip persons with disabilities with the skills needed to create their own income-generating initiatives.

The first Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management Training for Persons with Disabilities was held in Kabwe,

attracting 53 representatives from various organisations for persons with disabilities (OPDs) from every district in Central Province. The participants engaged in a participatory training programme that covered a wide range of topics from financial management and accounting to marketing, social responsibility, and business planning.

The training empowered persons with disabilities to achieve self-reliance and enhanced their professional skills and knowledge base to overcome the barriers and challenges they face in the labour market such as discrimination, stigma, and a lack of access.

Several participants expressed their eagerness to share the skills and knowledge they had gained from the training with their peers in their district. Olivier Nachulondo, a member of the Tonka Twende for Persons with Disabilities group in Chisamba district, shared, "We are going to turn the clock the other way around, because whatever I have learnt here, I will definitely have to go and disseminate to my friends so that they can also know that even though we have the same type of business as other people, we can add value on our produce so we can sell and thrive on the market.

With nine more provinces to go, the UNDP Resident Representative, James Wakiaga, is optimistic that the training programme will have life-changing impact for persons with disabilities across the country, noting:

UNDP has a clear mandate to advance the core principles of the UN Charter and support disability inclusive development through the twin complementary frameworks of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are mutually inclusive.

As the development arm of the UN system, UNDP is spearheading a paradigm shift from a welfarist perception of disability to promoting economic empowerment and self-reliance".

He adds, "Skilling persons with disabilities in Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management is one critical way that enhances their access to development opportunities and benefits. UNDP is therefore committed to work with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and related stakeholders to fulfill the human rights obligations under the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda".

Disability Inclusion is one of the major mandates for UNDP within the Government of the Republic of Zambia-United Nations Joint Programme of Social Protection (GRZ-UNJPSP).

Through this project, UNDP leverages its expertise and comparative advantage in disability inclusive development to enhance the capacity of duty bearers and rights holders, contributing to the socio-economic inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in Zambia. In that way, we can tap into the potential and perspectives for persons with disabilities to ensure that Zambia achieves sustainable development that

**#LeaveNoOneBehind.**



## Over 2 million children vaccinated against polio in the first round of the nOPV2 campaign

Zambia reached a significant milestone in its fight against polio, successfully vaccinating 2,268,249 children in the first round of the novel Oral Polio Vaccine Type 2 (nOPV2) campaign conducted from 24 to 29 July 2024. The campaign targeted 2,297,034 children under five in 44 districts across Central, Copperbelt, Luapula, and North-western provinces.

The Ministry of Health, with support from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners, conducted the first round of the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) campaign as part of the series of vaccination drives recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) and other GPEI partners, and as a response to the detection of the vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 from an environmental sample collected from the Masala sewer line in Ndola district, on 02 February, 2024.

The vaccination campaign was conducted through door-to-door visits and at strategic points such as markets, churches, and schools across the participating districts.

This 99 percent coverage in this first round is a significant step in the global push to eradicate all forms of polio. With continued commitment and community engagement, the country is well on its way to ensuring that future generations are free from the devastating effects of polio.

Health authorities have acknowledged the pivotal role of the community in the campaign's success. The campaign dispelled myths about the vaccine by working closely with local leaders and community-based volunteers and engaging parents through public awareness initiatives. This collaborative effort, driven by the community's commitment, encouraged widespread participation, ensuring the campaign's success.

The campaign's smooth operation was made possible by the significant technical and financial support provided by GPEI partners, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Crown Agents, Gavi-the Vaccine Alliance, Rotary Club, UNICEF, and WHO.





# Summit of the Future: Empowering communities, protecting futures!



In continued efforts to promote awareness within Zambian communities about the Summit of the Future and its potential impact on the lives of the people and development of the nation, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Lusaka in partnership with the government through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, the Zambia Men's Network for Gender and Development conducted a successful community discussion in Kapatamoyo village in Chipata District of Eastern Province on early child marriages.

With over 100 community members, including 10 village headmen in attendance, the outreach brought together a diverse group of participants, who played a crucial role in providing different experiences and insights to the one of the major developmental issue the district is facing and the devastating effects of early child marriages on individuals, families, and communities, with a particular emphasis on community-driven solutions and urgent need for collective action.

"Early child marriage is a very serious issue in my chiefdom with over five cases monthly. It is for this reason that the chiefdom established a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Committee in 2020, as we noted that early child marriage is a form of GBV and needed attention," said Chief Kapatamoyo.

The traditional leader explained that his chiefdom has developed training programmes for village headmen and headwomen to enhance their knowledge and understanding on the vice and reporting procedures.

He further mentioned that the chiefdom has been conducting sensitization exercises to raise awareness about the negative impact of the vice and further address related issues like teenage pregnancies and defilement cases.

Meanwhile, 16-year-old Peggie Mazyopa narrated that she was forced into early child marriage due to peer pressure and poverty.

"I used to admire my friends who were married because I come from a poor family with 12 siblings, I thought marriage will provide me with a solution to end the poverty since I will have a husband to take care of my needs. Tradition practices like the initiation ceremony made the situation worse because immediately I went through the process, I wanted to explement what I learnt which resulted in me getting pregnant and married when I was only 14-year-old," she related.

The community engagement highlighted challenges and provided participants an opportunity to reflect on some of the solutions they need to implement to support the fight against the vice.

Participants expressed their commitment to working together to implement strategies for a more just and equitable society. The outreach program was hailed as a success, with participants expressing gratitude for the opportunity to engage in open dialogue and learn about potential

solutions to these pressing issues.

UNIC Lusaka plans to continue its efforts to support community-led initiatives aimed at addressing early child marriage.

Zambia will from 23-24 September 2024 join other United Nations member states at the Summit of the Future that will be held in New York to forge a new international consensus on delivering a better present and safeguarding the future.





## Zambia Launches Human Development Report 2023/24



Uneven development progress is leaving the poorest behind, exacerbating inequality, and stoking political polarization on a global scale. The result is a dangerous gridlock that must be urgently tackled through collective action, according to a new report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Today, UNDP Zambia held the national launch for the 2023/24 Human Development Report (HDR), titled “Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world”, alongside the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, and the UN Resident Coordinator for Zambia, Ms Beatrice Mutali.

The report reveals a troubling trend: a rebound in the global Human Development Index (HDI) – the summary measure reflecting a country’s Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, education, and life expectancy – has been partial, incomplete, and unequal. When the report was first published in 1990 with an introduction of a new Human Development Index (HDI), Zambia has an HDI of 0.417, today its HDI value has grown by over 36% and currently sits at 0.569 – leaving the nation with a rank of 153 out of 193 countries and territories.

While this grants Zambia middle-income status, the nation has many strides to make before it can be considered a high-income state. The HDI was projected to reach record highs in 2023 after steep declines during 2020 and 2021. But this progress is deeply uneven. Rich countries are experiencing record-high levels of human development while half of the world’s poorest countries remain below their pre-crisis level of progress.

Global inequalities are compounded by substantial economic concentration and disasters. As referenced in the report, almost 40 percent of global trade in goods is concentrated in three or fewer countries; and in 2021 the market capitalization of each of the three largest tech companies in the world surpassed the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of more than 90 percent of countries that year.

The widening human development gap revealed by the report shows that the two-decade trend of steadily reducing inequalities between wealthy and poor nations is now in reverse. Despite our

deeply interconnected global societies, we are falling short. We must leverage our interdependence as well as our capacities to address our shared and existential challenges and ensure people’s aspirations are met,” said Achim Steiner, head of the UN Development Programme. “This gridlock carries a significant human toll.

The failure of collective action to advance action on climate change, digitalization or poverty and inequality not only hinders human development but also worsens polarization and further erodes trust in people and institutions worldwide.” The also report emphasizes how global interdependence is being reconfigured and calls for a new generation of global public goods.

It proposes four areas for immediate action: planetary public goods, for climate stability, as we confront the unprecedented challenges of the Anthropocene; digital global public goods, for greater equity in harnessing new technologies for equitable human development; new and expanded financial mechanisms, including a novel track in international cooperation that complements humanitarian assistance and traditional development aid to low-income countries; and dialling down political polarization through new governance approaches focused on enhancing people’s voices in deliberation and tackling misinformation.

In this context, multilateralism plays a fundamental role, the report argues, because bilateral engagements are not able to address the irreducibly planetary nature of the provision of global public goods. Speaking at the national launch of the HDR, Mr James Wakiaga, the Resident Representative of UNDP Zambia, stated, “Zambia is vulnerable to climate change. Scaling up climate finance and technology transfer through multilateral funds and South-South cooperation is crucial to support Zambia’s adaptation and low-carbon development efforts.”



# PHOTO FOCUS

Chongwe Joint RC and HOA SUNII end of programme monitoring visit





# Academia through Farming: The Story of Maureen Phiri



Maureen Phiri's story of determination unfolds in Lundazi district of Eastern Province, Zambia. At 29 years old, Maureen balances her roles as a smallholder farmer, a mother of three, and a third-year college student at Chipata College of Education.

She cultivates maize, soya beans, and sunflower, but her aspirations extend far beyond the boundaries of her fields. In addition to farming, Maureen operates a small business selling groceries and Chitenge wrappers. Amid daily challenges, she struggled with financial instability and uncertainty, especially during lean seasons, when food security became a concern.

A significant turning point occurred in 2020 when Maureen joined the Savings for Change Group supported by Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN II). This choice would play a crucial role in transforming her future. As the group's secretary and a trained animator, Maureen experienced firsthand the empowering impact of savings and financial empowerment for women.

"Before the group, life was difficult. Managing finances was a constant struggle, and food insecurity loomed large in my household. However, with the support of the savings group, I see savings as a source of stability and resilience in the face of adversity," said Maureen.

Through the group's share-outs, Maureen gained access to essential resources for farming inputs such as fertiliser and seeds. Maureen's savings went beyond farming inputs to meet critical needs, like providing food for

her family during difficult periods. With each share-out, Maureen's confidence grew, and her aspirations soared.

When the harvest season arrived, Maureen seized the opportunity to invest in diversifying her future livelihoods.

After selling her maize production surplus in 2020, she diligently saved the proceeds amounting to ZMW6500 (US\$279) within the savings group, capitalising on the opportunity to earn interest, and she got a total share out of ZMW10,950 (US\$470) at the end of the first cycle.

Maureen celebrated achieving her savings goals by investing in buying two pigs and farm inputs. In February 2021, she began her primary teacher's diploma course at Chipata College of Education, using part of her savings from the first cycle to pay for her tuition fees.

She is now entering her third year of studies, embodying the transformative power of education. Aside from the benefits of joining the savings group, Maureen notes that she has gained valuable knowledge from the nutrition training shared by WFP and its partners.

Before I joined the savings group, I struggled to have three meals a day," said Maureen. "We were taught that pregnant and lactating mothers should have all the necessary nutrients and know which foods to give to children up to two years at different times. Good nutrition in mothers leads to healthy childbirth and healthy children, while poor

nutrition can result in malnourishment or underweight children.

Maureen explains that she has acquired knowledge on how to grow and preserve her own nutritious food.

From the training, we learned how to preserve vegetables, so we have them during lean seasons when certain vegetables are not available," she said. "When you get vegetables, boil and dry them before storing in a cool, dry place with low moisture to preserve them through the dry season. I like drying rape, cabbage, and pumpkin leaves. The good thing is that sometimes you can sell the surplus dried vegetables", Maureen added.

Looking back on her journey, Maureen deeply appreciates the World Food Programme and its partners for investing in women like her through projects like the SUN II initiative.

With support from initiatives like Savings for Change groups, women are breaking barriers, overcoming challenges, and rewriting their destinies," said Maureen.

"After training as animators, we have formed numerous savings groups that are helping fellow women overcome challenges and change their lives for the better," she added.

Maureen's journey takes her from the fields of Kvilleka to the halls of academia, highlighting the unlimited potential of every woman.





## BREAKING BARRIERS: KNB INITIATIVE BRIDGING GAPS AND FOSTERING COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEALTH AND NON-HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR IMPROVED HIV-SRHR OUTCOMES



In Zambia, access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services for vulnerable populations such as migrants, sex workers, and youths has historically been fraught with challenges. These groups often face social stigma, legal barriers, and limited access to information and healthcare services, exacerbating their risk of HIV and other sexual health issues.

The Knows No Borders (KNB) Phase II, a regional project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in partnership with Save the Children, is setting a new standard in improving the quality of life and HIV-SRH outcomes among vulnerable youth, migrants, and sex workers in Zambia and across Southern Africa.

At the heart of this initiative lies a unique collaboration between health and non-health service providers, including the Zambia Police Service, Immigration Officials, Teachers, and religious leaders. These professionals, often the first point of contact for at-risk individuals, are being equipped with the knowledge and tools to foster safe sexual behaviors and protect vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse.

Gwen Kamoti, a Child Protection Officer with the Zambia Police Service, stands as a testament to the profound impact of the KNB Initiative. "The capacity building trainings facilitated by IOM are crucial for my role, especially since I deal directly with vulnerable populations, including children," Kamoti explains.

"One such training was the Health and Non-health Service Providers Capacity Building Training which also included information and techniques on Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse,

a crucial issue we address under the Zambia Police Service, Victim Support Unit. Here, we handle various victims, including those who lodge complaints or seek assistance with issues relating to sexual abuse, harassment, and exploitation," she added.

Kamoti highlights the transformative nature of the recent training, emphasizing its role in enhancing her capacity to create a conducive and enabling environment for victims. "It has built my capacity in terms of facilitating access to different health and non-health services by vulnerable populations such as migrants, sex workers and children.

The knowledge gained will help me create a safe space for victims to open up and express themselves, allowing our unit to provide effective support and services," she says. "Vulnerable populations like migrants, sex workers, and youths are at high risk of manipulation and abuse due to their social status and desperation for support," she added.

The KNB Phase II initiative recognizes that effective change requires a multi-faceted approach, integrating efforts across different sectors. By involving the Zambia Police Service, the project ensures that law enforcement officers are not only enforcers of the law but also protectors and advocates for the vulnerable. Immigration officials play a critical role in safeguarding the rights and well-being of migrants, while teachers and religious leaders provide guidance and support within communities, fostering an environment

of trust and openness.

"The Knows No Borders Phase II project is crucial in bridging gaps and fostering collaboration between different service providers to improve the quality of life and HIV-SRH outcomes among vulnerable groups," notes Joseph Yowela Mwamba, KNB Country Project Officer.

The health and non-health capacity building interventions by IOM under KNB Phase II initiative are more than just a training program; they represent a paradigm shift in addressing sexual health and exploitation. This initiative underscores the importance of a holistic approach, where the intersection of health and non-health services creates a robust support system for those most in need.

"By empowering frontline workers with the right skills and knowledge, we are building a safer and healthier future for at-risk populations including migrants, youths and sex workers in Zambia and across Southern Africa," Mr Mwamba explained.





## “Shaping Inclusive Narratives: Media Editors Join Forces for Disability-Inclusive Reporting”

Now that the media's influence on public perception is undeniable, ensuring that all voices, especially those of people with disabilities, are accurately and respectfully represented is more critical than ever. Recognising this need, the United Nations (UN) System in Zambia organised a dynamic training workshop on Disability-Inclusive Reporting for media editors from 12 media institutions from 13 – 14 August 2024.

The workshop which was designed to equip media professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary for disability-inclusive reporting, aligned closely with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the effort highlights Goal 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities, and Goal 17, which promotes partnerships for achieving these Global Goals. By enhancing reporting practices, the media can significantly contribute to breaking down barriers that hinder the full participation of individuals with disabilities in society.

Speaking at the training workshop Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Chair of the Leaving No One Behind Theme Group Keisha Livermore emphasized the vital role the media plays in shaping societal attitudes and influencing public perceptions towards people with disabilities. “Unfortunately, Persons with Disabilities are often underrepresented or

misrepresented, facing stereotypes that inadvertently perpetuate harmful attitudes and reinforce societal barriers,” she stated. “By enhancing our reporting practices, we not only uplift the narratives surrounding individuals with disabilities but also contribute to breaking down barriers that hinder their full participation in society.”

Gift Bwalya, a participant in the workshop and a person with albinism, shared her perspective on the importance of disability-inclusive reporting. “As someone who has often been misrepresented in the media, this training is incredibly meaningful to me. It’s not just about changing how stories are told, it’s about changing how we, as Persons with Disabilities, are perceived by society. Accurate and respectful media portrayals can help dismantle the stereotypes and misconceptions that we face daily,” she explained.

Bwalya emphasized that the workshop provided a platform for media professionals to understand the real-life impact of their work on Persons with Disabilities. “By engaging directly with people like me, media editors can gain a deeper insight into our experiences and challenges. This understanding is crucial in creating content that not only informs but also empowers. I believe this training is a vital step towards a more inclusive media landscape, where everyone’s story is told with the dignity and respect it deserves,” she added.

Furthermore, Zambia National Broadcasting Cooperation (ZNBC) News Editor, Julius Sakala, highlighted the crucial role the workshop plays in transforming media practices. “This training is essential for the media as it equips us with the tools and understanding needed to report on disability issues with greater sensitivity and accuracy.

The narratives we craft have a profound influence on public perceptions, and it’s our responsibility to ensure that these narratives are inclusive and respectful. By participating in this workshop, we are not only enhancing our skills but also committing to a more responsible and ethical approach to journalism that can help foster a more inclusive society,” he emphasized.

The workshop created a space for learning, collaboration, and reflection, with the ultimate goal of developing actionable strategies for inclusive media practices. It further signified a significant step towards ensuring that the media becomes a powerful ally in the fight for disability inclusion, shaping narratives that truly reflect the diversity and dignity of all individuals in society.



# Progressing Towards a Digital Future

## Zambia's Path to Inclusive Legal Identity



In an era where digital transformation is not just an aspiration but a necessity, Zambia is poised to take a monumental leap forward. The recent workshop on the Zambia Country Assessment for the Model Governance Framework for Digital Legal Identity, hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), marked a significant milestone. It was an event teeming with anticipation and promise, where government officials, experts, and stakeholders came together with a shared vision of a digitally inclusive Zambia.

Mr. Nkula Mwanza, Director - ICT at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS), during his opening address on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Dickson Matembo, highlighted that this initiative couldn't have come at a better time. "We are excited to update you that despite limited tools, we have managed to onboard a significant number of citizens to our INRIS database, and the process is ongoing."

The significance of the meetings held during the assessment lies not only in the immediate objectives but also in the broader implications for Zambia and Africa at large. Across the continent, the push towards digital legal identity systems is gaining momentum, including the use of biometric identities (IDs). Countries like Morocco, Nigeria, and Malawi are among those that have implemented biometric ID systems, recognizing the myriad benefits these systems offer, from enhancing service delivery to ensuring the rights and security of their citizens.

However, the implementation of digital identity systems is not without challenges. Privacy issues are a major concern, as the collection and storage of biometric data must be safeguarded against misuse and breaches. Technological barriers also exist, including the need for reliable infrastructure and technical expertise to maintain and secure these

systems. Additionally, public acceptance is crucial, citizens must trust and understand the benefits of digital IDs for the initiative to succeed.

Speaking at the workshop, UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. James Wakiaga emphasized that innovation and technology of the new ID system are the cornerstones of digital transformation and added that "they help to improve efficiency in government public service."

Mr Wakiaga stated that "The absence of a secure legal identity system fosters exclusion and impacts negatively on the ability of citizens to access pensions, social services, business opportunities, and other government services. This reality underscores the urgency for robust digital ID systems. By providing a secure and universally accessible means of identification, countries can dramatically improve public service delivery and foster inclusive economic growth.

In Zambia, the initiative is part of a broader strategy to harness technology for sustainable development, ensuring no one is left behind. The workshop was more than just a meeting, it was a collaborative effort to chart a clear path forward. The event featured in-depth discussions, focus group interviews, and a series of strategic planning sessions. Experts from UNDP, along with government representatives from civil society worked together to identify governance gaps and develop actionable proposals.

"This assessment will produce a mobilization plan for implementation," noted Mr. Mwanza, emphasizing the concrete outcomes expected from the initiative. "Your participation and contributions will be instrumental in ensuring the success of this assessment and subsequent implementation.

Structured around the Model Governance Framework for Legal Digital Identity

Systems, the assessment aims to provide a comprehensive blueprint for implementing or enhancing digital ID systems. For Zambia, the focus will be on ensuring a rights-based, inclusive, and user-driven digital ID system.

"Governance assessment models like these are crucial for framing strategic national conversations and positioning the country for future advancements," stated Mr. Wakiaga. "UNDP is committed to sustaining partnerships and fostering collaboration across sectors for effective e-governance." Digital legal identity systems promise numerous benefits.

They streamline government operations, reduce costs, and enhance public record accuracy. For citizens, reliable digital IDs simplify access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and voting. The technology behind biometric IDs and digital identity systems involves capturing unique biological traits such as fingerprints, facial features, or iris patterns, which are then stored in a secure database. These biometric markers are difficult to forge, ensuring a high level of security and accuracy in identity verification processes. Implementing such technology requires sophisticated equipment and software, as well as robust data protection measures to prevent unauthorized access and ensure citizens' privacy.

As Zambia progresses on this transformative journey, understanding how local context influences the initiative is crucial. Unique challenges such as rural infrastructure limitations and varying digital literacy levels require tailored solutions. UNDP collaborates closely with Government of Zambia to address these challenges through initiatives like mobile registration units and public awareness campaigns on digital ID benefits, ensuring accessibility and effectiveness for all Zambians.



## Zambia Hosts Regional Technical Workshop on Maternal and Newborn Health, Rebrands Initiative as ‘Every Woman Every Newborn #HealthyFutures



With support from the United Nations (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA) and partners, Zambia recently hosted a pivotal regional technical workshop focused on maternal and newborn health, drawing participants from over 13 African countries and beyond.

This significant gathering, held in Lusaka, marked a transformative moment for the region's efforts to combat preventable maternal and newborn mortality. In a move that symbolizes a renewed commitment to this cause, the workshop also introduced a rebranding of the initiative, now known as 'Every Woman Every Newborn #HealthyFutures.

The workshop, initially centered around operationalizing the Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) and Early Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), brought together health experts, policymakers, and representatives from various international and civil society organizations, and aimed to translate global, regional, and national commitments into actionable strategies to implement locally, ensuring every mother and newborn has access the care they need.

Participants engaged in detailed discussions on the challenges and opportunities within the current healthcare system, focusing on strengthening health services, improving data collection and usage, and increasing community engagement to support maternal and newborn health.

Speaking on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Beatrice Mutali, Dr. Nathan Bakyaita, WHO Representative to Zambia, highlighted the critical need for continued investment in maternal and newborn health: "Investing in maternal and newborn health is not only a moral imperative but a smart investment in our future. Healthy mothers and children are the foundation of healthy societies and prosperous economies."

The workshop provided a platform for countries to share experiences and best practices, focusing on overcoming the unique challenges faced by health systems in the region. Key topics included improving access to quality maternal and newborn care, enhancing data collection and analysis, and fostering more robust community engagement.

Dr George Sinyangwe, Permanent Secretary for Donor Coordination, representing the Minister of Health, called for continued collaboration and common purpose to ensure that every mother and newborn in Africa has an opportunity to survive and thrive. "This workshop is not just about policy; it's about common purpose and action. We must ensure that our strategies are not only comprehensive but also adaptable to the needs of our communities. Every life saved is a testament to our collective effort and commitment." The decision to rebrand the initiative to 'Every Woman Every Newborn #HealthyFutures'

reflects an expanded vision that goes beyond just preventing mortality. The new name emphasizes the broader goal of ensuring every woman and newborn has access to quality healthcare, promoting survival and long-term health and well-being.

As the workshop concluded, all participants renewed their sense of urgency and commitment to accelerate the implementation of the Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality and Early Newborn Action Plan. The workshop's outcomes are expected to inform national policy and guide future initiatives to improve maternal and newborn health.

In 2021, Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) and Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) global partnership, co-chaired by WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, established population coverage targets for each of these critical high-impact packages of care with country governments to accelerate progress in maternal and newborn health by 2025.



## ILO and Stakeholders Develop Agriculture Skills Strategy for Zambia

As the country grapples with the negative effects of the drought on agriculture, water, energy and food security, there is need for all stakeholders to identify critical skills and narrow the skills gaps in various sectors to mitigate the situation.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) through the European Union (EU) supported Skills Development for Increased Employability Programme (SDEP) organised a three-day Agriculture Skills for Productivity, Environment and Economic Diversification (SPEED) Technical and Foresight workshop at Urban Bliss Hotel in Kabwe, which resulted in the framework draft Sector Skills Strategy being developed.

The workshop, held from 27 to 29 August 2024, drew participation from senior government officials, workers and employers' representatives, industry players, farmers, academia, training institutions and the private sector.

Officiating at the event, Ministry of Technology and Science, Permanent Secretary Dr Brilliant Habeenzu said the drought situation has compelled his ministry to review the agriculture curriculum in the country further noting that the curriculum review process has highlighted skills gaps in the irrigation sub-sector.

"The drought has taught us not to depend on rainfall alone but to explore irrigation and other technologies in food production to make the country food sufficient and to look at agriculture as a viable business," he said.

Dr Habeenzu said there was need to make the agriculture sector attractive and viable.

"We need to address among others, inadequate training among farmers, traditional farming methods that may be inefficient and unsustainable; limited access to training by rural communities, financial constraints making many farmers failing to meet the costs associated with formal education and training programmes; and extension services may not reach all farmers, particularly those in remote areas," he said.

Dr Habeenzu further said his ministry was committed to developing agriculture curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the people, facilitating market linkages, value addition and entrepreneurship skills.

Meanwhile, ILO Chief Technical Advisor for the Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project, Dr Lloyd Ngo said the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to critically analyze the current and future skills needs in the agriculture sector.

Dr Ngo, who spoke on behalf of ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Mr. Wellington Chibebe, explained that the agriculture industry was undergoing significant structural changes due to global trends such as rapid technological advancements, increasing demand for food and agricultural products, and the need for efficient utilization of limited natural resources.

These challenges, coupled with the imperatives of environmental sustainability and climate change, make it essential to understand which

occupations and skills will be in demand in the future. This understanding is crucial for the sustainability of the sector, the nation's food security, and our country's competitiveness," he said.

And Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) Executive Director Mr Harrington Chibanda called for the identification of the existing skills gaps to spur the agricultural sector and create decent jobs for the youth in the country.

In a speech read on his behalf by ZFE Marketing and Membership Officer, Mrs Rose Chikotola-Sichizya, Mr Chibanda said there was need for value addition in the agriculture sector for it to contribute to employment creation and economic development.

"Agriculture is a critical sector and a means to improve the lives of millions of people as most of the poor people are peasant farmers and those who are not spend their income on food," he said. "Developing skills that are relevant to the agriculture sector to transfer the agriculture sector in Zambia can raise incomes of households, reduce malnutrition and kick-start the economy on a path to middle-income growth."

Meanwhile, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Director- Public Relations and International Affairs - Mr Kabika Kakunta applauded the ILO and the EU for providing technical and financial support at the workshop, stating that there was need to address the skills mismatch in the agriculture sector.



## UN Zambia Participates at Lusaka Internet Meet-Up



The Bloggers of Zambia organized a highly successful Lusaka Internet Meet-Up from July 18 to 19, 2024, at Lusaka's Taj Pamodzi Hotel. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from the government, the United Nations (UN), the Swedish Embassy, and various digital enthusiasts, professionals, and influencers. The meet-up aimed to explore the transformative power of the internet in various sectors and foster collaboration among different entities.

The UN participated as exhibitors and contributed to one of the key sessions. Their presence underscored the importance of digital platforms in advancing global development goals and highlighted the UN's commitment to leveraging technology for social good.

One of the highlights of the meet-up was the panel discussion titled; 'How the UN is Using the Internet for Good. Ethel Mbewe Maimbo, an Information Technology (IT) Solutions Associate from the World Food Programme (WFP), was a key panelist.

She shared insightful perspectives on how WFP leverages internet technologies to enhance food security and streamline operations in remote areas.

Her discussion emphasized the critical role of digital solutions in addressing global hunger and improving the efficiency of food distribution networks.

The session was moderated by Charles

Nonde, Public Information Assistant from the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC).

Nonde's adept moderation ensured a dynamic and engaging discussion, allowing panelists to delve deep into the innovative ways the UN is harnessing the internet for humanitarian and developmental purposes.

At the exhibition table, Peggy Banda from UNESCO presented the OwnU App and the Learning Passport, key components of UNESCO's digital platform aimed at enhancing educational access and quality.

The OwnU App is designed to provide personalized learning experiences, while the Learning Passport offers a comprehensive digital education program that can be accessed by students worldwide. Banda's presentation highlighted the potential of these tools to bridge educational gaps and provide continuous learning opportunities, especially in underserved regions. Reuben Sapetulu, representing UNICEF, discussed the u-Report and the Internet of Good Things.

The u-Report is an innovative platform that empowers young people to voice their opinions on issues affecting their communities. It uses SMS and social media to gather real-time data and insights, which are then used to inform policy and decision-making.

The Internet of Good Things, on the other hand, is a collection of mobile-ready resources that provide life-saving and life-improving information to communities. Sapetulu's discussion underscored the importance of

these digital tools in promoting youth engagement and improving community health and well-being.

The Lusaka Internet Meet-Up also featured various interactive sessions, and networking opportunities, allowing participants to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and collaborate on future projects. The event was a testament to the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping the future of Zambia and the broader African continent.

Participants left the meet-up inspired and equipped with new insights and tools to leverage the internet for social good. The Bloggers of Zambia have once again demonstrated their commitment to fostering a vibrant digital community and promoting the positive impact of the internet in society.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, events like the Lusaka Internet Meet-Up play a crucial role in bringing together stakeholders from different sectors to explore innovative solutions and drive positive change.

The success of this event sets a promising precedent for future gatherings and collaborations aimed at harnessing the power of the internet for the greater good.



# Investment Case on Road Safety in Zambia Launched



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, James Wakiaga, delivered a keynote address during the official launch and handover of the Road Safety in Zambia Investment Case.

The event marked a significant milestone in Zambia's efforts to improve road safety and reduce traffic-related fatalities, bringing together key government officials, international partners, civil society organizations, and private sector representatives to discuss and unpack the crucial findings of this comprehensive study.

In his remarks, Mr. Wakiaga expressed his gratitude to the key ministries, the Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, for their leadership and support of UNDP-led programmes aimed at fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030.

He emphasized that the initiatives reflect both global and national aspirations to improve road safety, particularly through projects like the "Pedestrian First Initiative" and "Investing in Walking and Cycling Policies in Zambia."

The recently launched Road Safety in Zambia Investment Case provides an estimate of the economic costs of road traffic accidents in Zambia, with specific emphasis on pedestrians. The results of this Investment Case provide a strong basis upon which key partners in both the private and public sector, can act to enhance joint efforts to achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

The Investment Case, developed in partnership with the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), and Research Triangle Institute (RTI), emphasizes the significant impact of pedestrian injuries and death and presents evidence supporting cost-effective interventions aimed at reducing pedestrian injury and death.

The Investment Case highlights the costs and benefits of implementing the 5 modelled interventions which are speed humps, road crossings, roadside pathways, post-crash prehospital care and alcohol breath testing. The findings underline the critical need for increased investment in road safety measures to ensure safer roads for all users.

"Safe roads are crucial for economic growth, especially in a country like Zambia, where road transport is the primary mode of transportation for goods and people," said Mr. Wakiaga. "Improved road safety can facilitate trade, boost tourism, and enhance the efficiency of supply chains, contributing to the broader goals of sustainable development."

To effectively address the concerning statistics outlined in the study, it is critical to assume a holistic approach that highlights the intersection of road safety

with health, environmental sustainability, economic growth, and equity. UNDP remains committed to reducing global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by half, by 2030 and ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible transportation for all, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

However, road safety must be recognized as a key investment area to ensure a prosperous future for Zambia, therefore it is especially important for partners from both the public and private sector to take the necessary step to support road safety through private-public partnerships, and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

The launch of the Investment Case marks a turning point in Zambia's efforts to secure increased funding for road safety, ultimately supporting the health and prosperity of the nation.

"We have the tools, the knowledge, and most importantly, the collective will. It is time to translate these into tangible, life-saving actions," Mr. Wakiaga stated.



## Youth Resource Centres: Catalysts for Community Development

### The Case of Chiyota Youth Resource Centre – Rufunsa District

For a long time now, Zambia has used Youth Resource Centres (YRCs) as key drivers of developing and empowering communities in rural areas. From Kafue to Mufumbwe, these resource centres have been a multifaceted platform for services that cater to the diverse needs of young people, fostering their growth and contributing significantly to the broader community's development.

There was cheerful noise in Chiyota community, situated over 80 kilometres from Lusaka City, after receiving a shipment of ICT (Information Communication Technology) equipment that has transformed the Resource Centre and will empower youths in the community.

The celebrations emanated from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia, hand-over of 30 desktops, 30 headsets, 30 monitors, 16 laptops, a projector, webcams and 2 printers donated to Chiyota YRC. This is one of the deliverables of the GRZ-UN Joint Youth Programme under the theme "Unleashing Scalable Solutions for Youth Empowerment in Zambia."

Chiyota YRC is part of the many government-run YRCs dotted across the country and is the second Centre to be refurbished after Mufumbwe in North-western province, which received a similar donation of equipment under the programme in December 2023. The Centre boasts of over 500 students accessing a range of skills training programmes of which ICT skills are part of the training programme although this has been hampered by lack of equipment and internet connectivity.

Digital inclusion is a key driver of sustainable development, especially for a youthful population as that of countries like Zambia. Consequently, the Joint Programme seeks to, among other things:

YRCs are critical in driving community development by offering vocational training and technical skills development, which are key for employment and entrepreneurship. Chiyota Youth Resource Centre offers

skills-building and practical training in trades, including carpentry, tailoring, financial literacy, electrical and mechanical engineering, and ICT.

During the launch of the Centre, the Minister of Youth, Sport and Arts, Honourable Elvis Nkandu gave a detailed description of how the Centre will be beneficial to young people and the community.

He said: "Chiyota Youth Resource Centre will serve as a hub for growth, learning, and development in the community through an increase in access to information on various initiatives being implemented by the state and non-state actors. This initiative will support access to information to programmes like the Farmer Input Support Programme, youth empowerment programmes sitting under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Mines and Minerals Development, and Technology and Science thereby contributing to the development of Rufunsa District and food security."

He further emphasized the important role that the Centre would play for marginalized populations such as girls and those with disabilities, saying "Centres such as these will not only be instrumental in providing equal access to ICT for young people, regardless of gender and physical abilities, but will also drive more young women and people with disabilities towards STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers, narrowing the digital divide".

UNDP Resident Representative, Mr James Wakiaga called on young women and men to rise to this opportunity and become part of the change in Chiyota community.

I call on the young people here to seize this opportunity and make the most of the facilities and equipment at your disposal. Take initiative in using the centre to learn and apply new skills, harness your creativity,

seek out new and exciting opportunities, and contribute to the development of your community. The future of Chiyota and its youth is bright," he noted.

Meanwhile, Margaret, a power electrical student remarked that the new Centre was an excellent opportunity for research, knowledge acquisition and sharing as well as keeping up to date with global trends.

With a lot of joy, Margaret reaffirmed the relevance of the Centre for communities as far-flung as Chiyota: "the Centre will enable us to have a better learning environment with the necessary tools and materials for up-to-date training. We are excited that this equipment has been connected to the Digital Platform for Youth that is currently being developed to increase youth access to productive resources, information and opportunities being provided by the Centre."

By providing such support to the Centre in Chiyota, the Joint Youth Programme aims to enhance the learning environment for young people with the necessary tools and materials for up-to-date vocational training and capacity development for Centre staff in vocational training best practices.





# FAO Zambia highlights innovations in sustainable fisheries and community empowerment at Blue Food Forum 2024



Zambia featured at a global forum on aquatic food value chains, where participants examined how these chains could help transform food systems and contribute to feeding a growing world population while keeping the planet healthy.

The Blue Food Forum took place on 12-13 September 2024 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and was hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania with the global fish value chain development program FISH4ACP, implemented by FAO under the leadership of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) with funding from the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

This international event underscored the pivotal role of aquatic food systems in addressing pressing global challenges, such as food security, climate change, and economic resilience, while emphasizing the impact of community-driven solutions.

A central theme of Zambia's participation in FISH4ACP was women empowerment to transform the kapenta fish value chain around Lake Tanganyika.

Dimitra Clubs played an instrumental role in promoting sustainable fishing practices and addressing social issues, particularly

those affecting women and youth. Kapenta, a small but crucial fish species, has played a significant role in Zambia's economy and supported numerous livelihoods in communities surrounding Lake Tanganyika. Unfortunately, the kapenta value chain faced significant challenges, including gender inequality and exploitative practices like "fish for sex," where female fish processors were coerced into exchanging sexual favors for fish.

Dimitra Clubs, a key innovation by FAO, tackled these issues head-on. By fostering participatory dialogue and collective action, these clubs empowered communities to address their social and economic challenges independently.

They particularly focused on elevating the roles of women and youth in managing resources, leading to significant improvements in the kapenta value chain and creating more equitable economic opportunities.

FAO National Professional Officer coordinating the FISH4ACP project in Zambia, Masiliso Phiri, indicated that the project was working to promote the sustainability of the kapenta value chain by improving economic, social, and health outcomes for women and youths. Ms. Phiri said the project was also working to improve quality and market access for kapenta while addressing environmental aspects,

particularly promoting compliance with sustainable management of the fisheries sector on Lake Tanganyika.

The Blue Food Forum provided an opportunity to showcase how initiatives like FISH4ACP were transforming the fisheries sector in Zambia and beyond. The event aimed to strengthen partnerships across governments, development organizations, and the private sector to promote sustainable aquatic food systems.

Outcomes from the Forum were expected to shape future policy directions, with a focus on sustainability, environmental stewardship, and inclusivity. The Forum also aimed to boost investments crucial for promoting aquaculture food value chains, ultimately combating climate change, boosting food security, and fostering economic development





# Celebrating Zambia at 60 Years and 79th United Nations Anniversary with a Run.

Over 2,500 participants Join SDGs Run and Walk by the UN in Zambia and Government of Zambia



The early hours of 26 October 2024 saw over 2,500 people from all walks of life gather at Lusaka's Showgrounds ready to run and walk for either 5km and 10km to celebrate Zambia's 60th Independence and the 79th United Nations (UN) Day.

The Zambia@60 and SDGs Fun Run and Walk, put together jointly by UN in Zambia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Zambia, symbolizing 60 years of partnership between the UN and Zambia, was also used to draw attention to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the collective journey by the UN and Zambia in ensuring a more inclusive and prosperous Zambia.

Participants started the morning in an energetic atmosphere as with upbeat aerobics, ready to show their commitment to both Zambia's legacy and future. The Honourable Minister of Tourism Mr. Rodney Sikumba, MP, was the Guest of Honor. He was joined by the Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary (Administration) Mrs. Hope Kalabi Situmbeko and the UN Resident Coordinator

Ms Beatrice Mutali and Members of the Diplomatic Corps with their families. Other participants included government officials, regular runners, women, youth, children and Persons with Disabilities, all representing the inclusive spirit of the SDGs and Zambia's dedication to leaving no one behind.

Soon after the aerobics and key announcements on Zambia and UN relations,

independence and SDG messages had been given by the event's Masters of Ceremonies, Ms Choolwe Changula (Lusaka Fitness Squad), Mr. Kafula Mwiche (Lusaka Fitness Squad) and Dr. Remmy Mukonka (UN Zambia), the Guest of Honor addressed the participants, expressing gratitude for their enthusiasm and flagged off the event. He led the way by participating in the run with Permanent Secretaries, UN Resident Coordinator and other dignitaries also getting on the routes.

Each participant was clad in a vibrant T-shirt with a country flag of their choice or UN emblem fixed in front, demonstrating unity, inclusion of all countries in the world and collective dedication to the SDGs. The routes took them past key government offices and historical sites, UN offices and diplomatic missions.

Families and friends ran and walked together as they chatted with new acquaintances. As participants stopped to refresh at water, juice and fruit points, they were treated to information on different SDGs for inspiration to act on the Global Goals. Several Persons with Disabilities, including wheelchair users, the hearing impaired and Persons with Albinism, fully participated and demonstrated resilience as they navigated the routes with joy.

The UN Resident Coordinator noted the importance of the SDGs. "Let us remember that action on the 17 SDGs is now more urgent than ever before as we only have about six years to 2030. Whether it's ending poverty,

ensuring quality education, promoting gender equality, or taking urgent action on climate change—every step we take today at institutional, or family level will go a long way in realizing the 17 Global Goals," said Ms Mutali.

As the participants crossed the finish line, there was a clear sense of unity and pride with each one receiving a medal. The Guest of Honor, Senior Government officials, Members of the UN Country Team and sponsors presented some gender-balanced recognition medals to fastest finishers, the oldest and youngest participants, Persons with Disabilities, youth, adolescents and the most determined participants, among others.

The event was open for anyone to participate with no fees charged. It was organized with financial and in-kind support from Standard Chartered Bank, Prudential Life Assurance Zambia, YESS Water (Acacia Beverages), Neelkanth Sarovar Premiere Lusaka, South Point Hospitals, and PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) LLP. Lusaka Fitness Squad and Choz Fitness served as event coordinator and fitness partner respectively.





# Human Rights Day: Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now!



In efforts to raise awareness about human rights and the importance of members of the public understanding the fundamental principles that protect their dignity, freedom, and equality, the United Nations (UN) System in Zambia through the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Information Centre in partnership with the Zambia Human Rights Commission and ActionAid – Global Platform Zambia organized a vibrant community engagement event in Chongwe district under the theme, “Our rights, Our future, right now.

The event was a colorful and dynamic celebration, featuring poetry, drama, and songs. These artistic expressions were not just for entertainment; they carried powerful messages about the realization of human rights and the collective responsibility to respect and protect them. The performances were a testament to the community’s creativity and commitment to human rights advocacy.

Speaking via a recorded message, OHCHR Under Secretary General Volker Türk, highlighted the global significance of human rights and the role of local communities in championing these rights. He said human rights ensure that every individual is treated with respect and dignity, regardless of race, gender, religion, or social status

ActionAid – Global Platform Zambia Business Development Manager, Geoffrey Sizala

emphasized that understanding one’s rights allows individuals to stand up against abuse, exploitation, and oppression.

Meanwhile, Zambia Human Rights Commission, Investigations Officer Charity Lange cautioned members of the community to be vigilant, noting that a society that respects human rights supports the rule of law, fairness, and accountability.

Giving solidarity remarks, Swedish Ambassador to Zambia, Johan Hallenborg, reaffirmed the international community’s support for Zambia’s human rights efforts, as human rights reduce inequalities and conflicts by fostering mutual respect and understanding.

The audience was a diverse mix of community members and representatives from various organizations which included the Chongwe Network for Persons with Disabilities, the Youth Adolescents Group, the Young Women Group, and representatives from the National Assembly, The Transparency Action Group, Market Cooperative, Royal Establishment, and the District Commissioner’s Office were also well-represented, reflecting the broad support for human rights across different sectors of society.

The Human Rights Day celebration in Chongwe was more than just an event; it was a powerful demonstration of what can be achieved when a community comes together with a common purpose. It highlighted the strength and resilience of the people of Chongwe and their unwavering dedication to building a future

where human rights are respected and upheld for all.

Human Rights Day is annually commemorated on 10 December. Raising awareness about human rights within communities is crucial, these rights, such as the right to life, freedom of speech, and equal treatment, are essential for a just and inclusive society.





## IOM's Lifeline to Zambia Amidst Severe Drought



As Zambia grapples with a severe drought that has devastated livelihoods, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has stepped up to support the government in a bid to alleviate the crisis. Through a series of strategic measures, IOM is helping to build capacity and raise awareness among communities, ensuring they are better prepared to face such environmental challenges.

One of the key initiatives has been the distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. These resources are designed to educate communities on how to protect themselves during displacement, a common consequence of severe drought. By empowering people with knowledge, IOM aims to create resilient communities capable of withstanding future environmental shocks.

In addition to educational materials, IOM has been instrumental in training programs for both community members and government staff. These programs enhance their ability to respond effectively to drought-induced displacement. "Our goal is to equip communities with the skills and knowledge they need to cope with and recover from disasters," said the IOM Zambia Chief of Mission Ms Keisha Livermore. "By building local capacity, we are fostering resilience and sustainability."

A significant part of IOM's efforts includes

supporting the government with awareness campaigns and capacity-building initiatives. These efforts focus on coping strategies and strengthening local protection structures. Over 10,000 Early Warning System materials have been donated to the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) to raise awareness and empower communities.

In the disaster-prone Gwembe district of the Southern Province, IOM has strengthened local protection structures by creating and building the capacity of Satellite Disaster Management Committees (SDMC).

These committees enable coordinated and efficient referral and reporting mechanisms from the communities to the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMC) on early warning systems. Additionally, IOM supported the DMMU with the distribution of 1,000 bottles of 18.9 liters of dispenser purified water, aimed at increasing access to clean water for vulnerable households.

The District Commissioner of Gwembe District commended IOM for their support, stating, "The distribution of clean water has been a lifeline for many households. We are grateful for IOM's continued support in these challenging times."

Furthermore, IOM has conducted capacity-building training for 27 District Disaster Management Unit Officers in the Eastern Province, including 13 women and 14 men. This training aims to equip them with the skills

needed to respond to future disasters and find sustainable, innovative, and durable solutions during disaster risk management and environmental degradation in Zambia.

IOM has strengthened early warning systems at national, provincial, and community levels by organizing awareness campaigns and outreach in disaster-prone communities such as Mansa, Nchelenge, and Chiengi. Over 1,500 people were reached through radio and community-based programming, improving community resilience.

As Zambia continues to navigate the challenges posed by severe drought, IOM's comprehensive support and strategic initiatives are proving to be a beacon of hope, helping to build a more resilient and prepared nation.





## Zambia Showcases Investment Opportunities in Maize, Soybean, Aquaculture, and Honey at the Global Hand in Hand Investment Forum in Rome

The Government of Zambia presented a robust investment case for its maize, soybean, aquaculture, and honey value chains at the Hand in Hand Investment Forum, held under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. This global platform for fostering sustainable agricultural partnerships attracted investors, development partners, and policymakers to explore opportunities in transforming agricultural value chains and promoting food security.

Leading the Zambian delegation, Hon. Reuben Mtolo, Minister of Agriculture, outlined Zambia's ambitious plans to secure over USD 900 million in investments across these four value chains. He emphasized Zambia's strategic focus on boosting agricultural productivity and exports to combat hunger, reduce poverty, and promote inclusive growth. "Zambia's commitment to sound agricultural policies and good governance creates a favorable environment for investment," said Hon. Mtolo, adding that the country's favorable climate, rich water resources, and fertile soils provide a natural advantage for producing high-quality agricultural products. Together with FAO, Zambia formulated investment plans to promote inclusive and sustainable growth across these key sectors.

Hon. Peter Kapala, Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, highlighted significant opportunities in Zambia's aquaculture sector, stressing its potential for poverty alleviation and food security. "Zambia's aquaculture

industry is poised for expansion," he said, encouraging investors to consider fish production, processing, and export opportunities, which would support economic diversification and rural job creation.

The forum underscored Zambia's strategic advantages through its involvement in key regional trade organizations—AfCFTA, COMESA, and SADC—which provide access to vast markets and support operational scaling. The Lobito Corridor, linking Zambia to the Atlantic Ocean, was also highlighted as an asset enhancing Zambia's logistical capabilities and export efficiency.

The investment plans covered several value chains:

**Maize:** Efforts aimed at boosting maize production include establishing mechanization hubs, expanding irrigation, and constructing warehouses for post-harvest management. Total required investment: USD 679 million.

**Soybean:** Targeted at meeting the global demand for plant-based proteins, the soybean value chain will see investments in production, processing, value addition, and certified seed multiplication. Total required investment: USD 47.9 million.

**Honey:** Known for its organic quality, Zambia's honey sector aims to support rural development through forest concessional beekeeping, Queen Bee rearing centers,

and out-grower schemes. Total required investment: USD 48.2 million.

**Aquaculture:** With Zambia's abundant water resources, the aquaculture sector aims to increase fish production, ensuring food security and rural employment through private sector participation across several value chain nodes. Total required investment: USD 96.7 million.

Suze Percy Filippini, FAO's Country Representative in Zambia, reiterated FAO's commitment to Zambia's agricultural transformation, emphasizing partnerships and technical expertise in reducing hunger and poverty while promoting inclusive economic growth.

Zambia's compelling investment case, supported by a conducive policy environment, regional trade advantages, and strategic infrastructure, positioned the country as an attractive destination for agricultural investment. These investments are expected to accelerate agricultural development, increase exports, and contribute significantly to eradicating hunger, alleviating poverty, and creating sustainable employment opportunities for Zambians.



## UNHCR, WFP, Zambia, and Partners Begin the Second Phase of Refugee Repatriation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo



On November 15, 2024, a convoy carrying 169 Congolese refugees departed from Mantapala settlement in Luapula Province, Zambia, beginning the second phase of voluntary repatriation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Government of the Republic of Zambia, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP) and partners collaborated in the exercise.

The refugee families, many of whom had spent years in Zambia after fleeing violence in their home country, were returning with a mix of emotions - hope for the future, but also anxiety about rebuilding their lives and the condition of their homesteads after years of displacement.

Marion (name changed to protect confidentiality), a mother of three, tearfully embraced her children as they prepared to board the bus. "We are going home," she said, though her voice was tinged with apprehension. "We have wanted to return for so long, but we were scared. We left everything behind—our home, our friends, our lives." Amid her uncertainty, there was also a sense of hope that this journey would lead to a better future.

The repatriation process is carefully managed to ensure the safety and well-being of each family. Before leaving Mantapala, UNHCR, Zambian authorities, and partners provided critical support, including legal assistance and counselling. WFP provided cash assistance to cater for the families' basic needs as they re-entered the DRC.

During the journey, the atmosphere was a mixture of celebration and anticipation. Aboard the buses, people sang songs and shared stories, looking forward to reuniting with families and rebuilding their lives after years of instability and violence.

Ms. Preeta Law, UNHCR's Representative in Zambia, emphasized that "Voluntary repatriation reflects our commitment to helping refugees who have fled violence to find durable, lasting solutions. Returning home is about dignity, security, and the promise of a new beginning."

Upon arrival in Pweto, the families were met by local officials and community members, who welcomed them back with open arms. To assist with their reintegration, they receive civil documentation and additional financial support to help them settle back into their communities.

All of the children returning will be enrolled in school, ensuring they can continue their education. While the journey home is an important first step, the challenge now is rebuilding lives in a region that has faced years of conflict.

As Marion watched her children play with local children in Pweto, she felt a sense of relief. For her, the journey was not just about returning to a place—it was about beginning again, with hope for a better life.





## Zambian children's voices echo at regional World Children's Day celebration in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

VICTORIA FALLS, Zimbabwe, December 2024 "Imagine a world where every child has access to quality education, that's the world we're working towards, and we all have a part to play to make it happen. Your voices matter," UNICEF Regional Director of Eastern and Southern Africa, Etleva Kadili, said at the official ceremony to mark 2024 Regional World Children's Day.

In a powerful demonstration of youth advocacy, fourteen children from Zambia joined their peers from six other Southern African nations at this celebration on Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Under the theme Educate & Skill the African Child for Posterity, the event brought together about 7,000 young delegates from Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe who led the call for quality and inclusive education in Africa. This represented another

historic meeting with regional leaders, which follows previous gatherings in Botswana, Zambia and Namibia. The Zambian delegation, representing all ten provinces of the country, participated in a series of engaging activities that emphasized children's rights and their vision for the future.

Among the highlights was 17-year-old Coreen Chola from Zambia, who delivered a compelling message about educational reform: "We need to ensure an education that is impactful and useful to us for the current modern and developing world. The curriculum should equip us with the relevant skills to navigate life from a very young age.

The young delegates had the unique opportunity to interact with the First Lady of Zimbabwe and participate in various activities, including crafting a unified Call-to-Action focusing on education and children's rights. Their message was clear: quality education should be accessible to all children, regardless of their circumstances.

Beyond the formal proceedings, the Zambian delegates enjoyed recreational activities that fostered friendship and cultural exchange. They experienced the majestic Victoria Falls and even tried their hand at golf, creating memorable moments with their peers from across the region.

The celebration highlighted significant progress in children's rights across Southern Africa, including Zambia's recent efforts to improve education through the recruitment of 4,200 teachers and the approval of the National Social Protection Policy. These achievements demonstrate the positive impact of listening to and acting upon children's voices.

The event concluded with a symbolic torch handover to Botswana, who will host the 2025 regional celebrations. This gathering not only amplified children's voices but also strengthened regional commitment to advancing children's rights and education across Southern Africa.

This memorable experience, supported by UNICEF Zambia, has equipped our young delegates with valuable insights and

connections that will help them continue advocating for children's rights in their schools and communities.

Creating platforms for children's participation also across Zambia

This regional gathering was the prelude of a series of activities for children, with children in Zambia on WCD, UNICEF, in partnership with the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), organized Children's Parliaments across all ten provinces of Zambia to better understand children's educational needs and develop actionable policy recommendations.

These provincial consultations culminated in a National Children's Parliament on November 18, where 80 children participated, including 14 who had previously represented Zambia in Zimbabwe.

To commemorate World Children's Day on November 20, UNICEF collaborated with Airtel Networks Africa to organize a Kids' Takeover event. During this initiative, 15 children aged 10-17 from diverse backgrounds shadowed Airtel Zambia's directors, gaining firsthand experience in corporate leadership and receiving motivational guidance from the company's managing director.



## FROM LUSAKA TO MILAN: REFUGEE STUDENTS PURSUE DREAMS WITH UNICORE

Angelina Ikuzwe and Precious Uzamutuma swiftly push their luggage trolleys up the escalator to the departures level of Kenneth Kaunda International Airport in Lusaka, Zambia. It is a life-changing day for the talented refugee students selected to pursue master's studies in Italy under the University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE) program, part of UNHCR's Complementary Pathways for Education initiative. This opportunity marks the beginning of a transformative academic adventure that was once beyond their reach.

The UNICORE scholarship program, part of UNHCR's Complementary Pathways for Education initiative, offers an opportunity for refugee students to pursue higher education in Italy. Supported by 38 Italian universities, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and several civil society organizations, UNICORE is entering its sixth year. In its sixth year, the 2024 edition provides 67 refugee students from nine African countries with scholarships to study in Italy, covering tuition, accommodation, meals, and study materials.

The program's success is made possible through partnerships with organizations like Caritas Italiana and Diaconia Valdese, which help UNHCR provide refugee students with opportunities that were once out of reach. Through these collaborations, talented individuals like Angelina and Precious are able to pursue education pathways that were previously unavailable to them.

Angelina, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo is starting her degree in medical biotechnology at the University of Milan. She learned about the UNICORE program two years ago. "I always wanted to do my master's in medical biotechnology but thought that I would not be able to do so, because no university offers it in Zambia. When I saw the call for UNICORE I knew that it was my chance to pursue my dream", she says. Angelina's goal is clear: "In 10 years, I want to be working in biotech, helping to develop products that could lead to cures for cancers."

Precious, a Rwandan refugee who was born in Lusaka and is going to study civil engineering at the Polytechnic University of Milan, shares a similar sense of purpose. "My number one goal is to be able to relay the knowledge that I will acquire during my master's and thereafter to others, as a researcher and university lecturer. I am confident that I will make a meaningful impact in the water engineering sector, improving lives and communities worldwide," she says.

UNHCR Zambia is proud of all four refugee students selected for the 2024 UNICORE program, including Angelina Ikuzwe and Precious Uzamutuma as well as Maombi Kalinda and Emmanuel Muhimpundu who departed for their studies in October. "We are excited to see the continued success of the program and the impact it will have in the coming years. We also want to express

our gratitude to the Italian government, and all other partners who make it possible for these students to pursue their education and become leaders in their fields," said Ms. Preeta Law, UNHCR Representative in Zambia.







## Meet Fidelis Hamweene: A Journey of determination and Transformation Through Social Cash Transfers

Resilient. This word perfectly describes 69-year-old Mr. Fidelis Hamweene Lubinga from Mpima Dairy Ward in Kabwe, Zambia. Amid Zambia's ongoing drought crisis, Mr. Lubinga, a senior citizen, and caregiver to his elderly parents, continues to thrive as a farmer, goat herder, and sole provider for his wife and children.

Thanks to the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme under the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Social Protection (UNJPSP ii) implemented by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), Mr. Lubinga now receives ZMW 400 (USD 15) bi-monthly. Before this support, he struggled to sustain his family by selling papayas at the local market. Today, the SCT has transformed his life and farming business.

Starting with four goats purchased using his SCT funds, Mr. Lubinga now proudly tends to a herd of 32. His children assist by selling the offspring from the herd in Kasumbalesa, a border town between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Not only have we received cash support, but we have been supported in learning about how to properly take care of the goats so that they remain healthy," he says.

Through the FAO-supported Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN II) project, Mr. Lubinga learned key animal husbandry practices, including building elevated goat enclosures to prevent disease.

Beyond farming, the SCT programme has helped Mr. Lubinga fund his children's education and construct a two-bedroomed house for his family.

"Through the cash support, I have been able to raise this structure and pay the workers helping me build," he explains, standing beside his wife in front of the house.

The extra income from goat sales also allows him to support his elderly parents, who live in Lusaka. "With the money I make from goat sales, I've been able to provide food for my parents, especially my father, who requires additional care after a recent stroke," he says.

While SCT has brought stability to his household, Zambia's drought threatens his hard-won gains. Many of his bananas and maize crops have dried up, affecting his income and food security. Like many farmers in his area, Mr. Lubinga is facing reduced yields and increased undernutrition in his community.

To cushion smallholder farmers like Mr. Lubinga during such crises, the Government of Zambia has expanded the SCT programme as part of its drought emergency response. This includes increasing transfers to existing households and adding new beneficiaries.

As Mr. Lubinga's story shows, social protection does not just help individuals but

uplifts entire families and communities. Despite the challenges, he remains optimistic, continuing to build a better future for his family with the support of SCT.

Zambia's Social Cash Transfer programme is made possible through the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Social Protection (UNJPSPii), which is implemented by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) with technical support from cooperating partners: ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

This programme is funded by the Governments of the Republic of Ireland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.



## UNOPS Zambia, Global Fund, and Ministry of Health commission the New Medical Oxygen Production Plant at the National Heart Hospital

On 6 Nov, the Hon. Dr. Elijah J. Muchima, Minister of Health, officially inaugurated the newly completed medical oxygen production plant at the National Heart Hospital. The facility, located in Chongwe District, Lusaka, will provide a steady and reliable supply of medical-grade oxygen to healthcare facilities across the Lusaka region. This development is part of a broader national effort to strengthen Zambia's healthcare infrastructure and improve access to essential medical supplies for all citizens.

This initiative was made possible through the collaboration between UNOPS Zambia, the Global Fund, and the Ministry of Health, who are working to complete an additional five oxygen plant at provincial hospitals across Zambia. The hospitals benefiting from this expansion include Kasama General Hospital (Northern Province), St. Paul's Mission Hospital-Nchelenge (Luapula Province), Kabwe Central Hospital (Central Province), Chinsali General Hospital (Muchinga Province), and Kalindawalo General Hospital (Eastern Province). A groundbreaking ceremony for these projects was held on May 13, 2024, at Kasama General Hospital and was officiated by former Health Minister Hon. Sylvia T. Masebo.

Minister for Health Dr. Elijah J. Muchima expressed his gratitude, saying, "I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema, the Global Fund, and UNOPS for their unwavering support in delivering this oxygen plant at the National Heart Hospital. This project will have a lasting impact on the fight against COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. Together, we are building a healthier and more resilient future for Zambia.

Rainer Frauenfeld, UNOPS Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, added, "Investing in healthcare infrastructure is not only about meeting current needs, but also about building a sustainable future. This new oxygen facility, along with others across Zambia, will serve as a beacon of hope, equipping healthcare workers with the necessary tools to deliver high-quality care."

This project aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).





## Making strides towards systematic disability Inclusion: UNFPA Zambia, ESARO and HQ collaboration at its best

The UNFPA Zambia country office reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) by incorporating a disability inclusion focus into its mid-year performance review, held from 27 to 29 August 2024 in Lusaka.

This review aimed to build the capacity of staff and partners to mainstream disability inclusion in programming, in alignment with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability-inclusive approaches are also being integrated into ongoing humanitarian response initiatives.

Facilitators for the training were drawn from UNFPA Headquarters, the East and Southern Africa Regional Office, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, and the Zambia Human Rights Commission to promote collaboration and cross-learning. During the sessions, Moses Chubili, a Programme Officer at the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Zambia, and Christine Chama, a Commissioner with the Zambia Human Rights Commission, shared their personal experiences as persons with disabilities, highlighting the barriers they face.

The training underscored the importance of fully adopting the Human Rights Model of disability, in line with Zambia's commitment to the CRPD, which it joined on December 13, 2006. This treaty acknowledges the inherent dignity, equality, and autonomy of persons

with disabilities, marking a significant step forward in global human rights. Ms. Chama shared an example of the lingering charity model in Zambia, recounting how health personnel often address her companion rather than her during medical visits, reflecting the need for a societal shift towards greater respect and inclusion.

UNFPA Zambia has made strides in disability mainstreaming within its sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. This includes supporting the Ministry of Health in developing a Basic Sign Language Module for integrated SRH, HIV, and GBV service provision, and training 20 clinical instructors and midwifery tutors in basic sign language across 26 institutions.

Key resolutions from the training included ensuring access to SRH information and services in sign language and braille for persons with disabilities, enhancing collaboration with disability organizations to address challenges, sensitizing decision-makers to prioritize accessible infrastructure such as inclusive maternity wards, and improving disability-disaggregated data collection in national surveys to inform decision-making.

On 30 August 2024, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Zambia Agency of Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), hosted a panel discussion in Lusaka themed "Catalyzing Action for Gender Transformative and

Disability Inclusive Drought Response." The event, attended primarily by Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, emphasized the importance of consulting these groups and incorporating their input to ensure inclusive and equitable responses to drought.

Additionally, emergency response interventions should prioritize sexual reproductive health services and menstrual hygiene support, such as providing sanitary towels for women and girls with disabilities. Cash transfers for persons with disabilities should be complemented by financial literacy programs and distributed at accessible locations.



**PHOTO FOCUS**  
**Zambia @60 & SDGS Run**



# UN TEAM IN ZAMBIA



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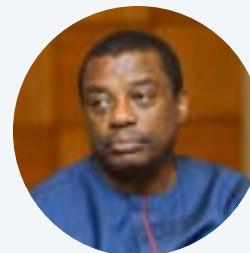
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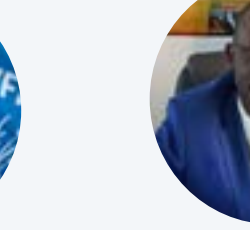
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