



UNITED NATIONS
ZAMBIA



2024

**ANNUAL RESULTS
REPORT**



ZAMBIA

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FOREWORD

We are delighted to present the 2024 UN Zambia Annual Results Report, a reflection on the year's milestones, challenges, and collective progress towards sustainable development. This is the third report under the 2023-2027 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)—a partnership between the UN System and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Throughout 2024, we collaborated with the government and a wide range of partners, including civil society, academia, youth organizations, and the private sector, to drive progress under the four UNSDCF pillars, which align with the country's Eight National Development Plan (8NDP) and serve as our guiding framework for impactful action. To ensure that our efforts stayed aligned with Zambia's evolving context, we conducted a comprehensive review and update of the 2021 UN Country Common Analysis (CCA), with valuable input from our partners.

Under the Prosperity Pillar, which is aligned with the 8NDP's focus on Economic Transformation and Job Creation, we contributed to budget analysis, climate-smart food systems, market access, youth empowerment, and sector investment plans, promoting economic transformation and job creation.

Regarding the People Pillar, and in support of the country's priority area of Human and

Social Development priority, we worked to strengthen Zambia's human capital. We helped to strengthen health systems, introduced a competence-based curriculum integrating digital literacy and climate change, and partnered with the private sector to address skills gaps in critical raw materials. For the Planet Pillar, which mirrors the Environmental Sustainability, we supported early warning systems, resilience-building, developing the National Green Growth Strategy (GGS), and stock-taking for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Through the Peace Pillar, that is in line with the Governance and Human Rights, we advanced democracy, women's representation, electoral reforms, and human rights.

To boost the efficiency and impact of our collective efforts, we enhanced the UN's Delivering as One (DaO) approach, leveraging the strengths of UN agencies through joint work plans and launching four new joint programmes on SDG localization, youth health, gender-based violence (Spotlight 2.0), and renewable energy adoption. These programmes attracted over \$18 million in catalytic funding for expansion and impact. Despite remarkable progress, 2024 tested Zambia's resilience. Challenges included a severe cholera outbreak that infected over 23,300 people and resulted in more than 700 deaths. The UN responded swiftly, supporting the government with water and sanitation access, vaccination campaigns, treatment centers, and public health awareness. Within just three months, the

outbreak was contained.

Zambia also experienced its worst drought in 50 years, devastating over 50% of agricultural production and leading to a national emergency. In response, we helped activate the cluster coordination system, ensuring a whole-of-system response that addressed immediate needs while building long-term resilience and prevention capacity. In line with our commitment to inclusion and equity, we made deliberate efforts to ensure persons with disabilities were not left out. We prioritized inclusivity by advancing Disability Inclusion, making key documents accessible in Braille and sign language to increase SDG awareness among persons with disabilities.

These successes were made possible through the leadership of Government of Zambia and the generous support - both financial and technical- of our donors and development partners. Together, we strengthened Zambia's social sectors, improved equitable access to essential services, and built resilience against future shocks.

Beatrice Mutali
Resident Coordinator of the UN System in Zambia



UNITED NATIONS TEAM IN ZAMBIA

The UN Country Team in Zambia (UNCT) comprises 24 Agencies, Funds and Programmes of which 12 are Resident and 12 Non-resident. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the team leads on implementation of the UNSDCF 2023-2027 that is aligned to Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).



KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS OF UN ZAMBIA



ZAMBIA AT A GLANCE

Zambia is a land-linked country in Southern Africa. The country is a member of both the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It shares borders with eight countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of The Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe).



Economy:

Agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism are key drivers for the country's economic transformation and growth. In 2024, GDP was projected at 4.7% which was further revised to 2.6% in the fourth quarter, due to the prolonged impact of the drought on the energy sector. By the end of December, the county had registered a 4% growth.



Poverty levels:

The Country continues to face challenges, including high poverty levels, food insecurity and unemployment. Poverty increased from 54.4% in 2015 to 60% in 2022, with the majority residing in rural areas.



Debt:

Zambia became the first country to seal a deal on debt restructuring under the G20 Common Framework, expected to bring savings of around \$5.8 billion.



Social sector budget allocation:

Priorities of the Government in social sector comprising Education, Health, Social Protection, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). In 2024, K59 billion(\$2.12 billion) was allocated to the sector, out of the total budget of K177.9 billion(\$6.4 billion), representing an increase of 18% from the 2023 budget.



Heavy Dependency on Copper:


Which contributes around 70% of its export earnings and 12% of its GDP.



Political situation:

A peaceful and stable country which provides a conducive environment for socio-economic development.



 **19.6 Million**
total population in 2022



10 million
Women



9.6million
Men



10.9 million for rural and **8.7 million** for urban

The population increased by an average of 3.4% between 2010 and 2022



The **young people** account for **70%** of the population

1. DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

The country continued to implement sound economic policies despite facing a challenging environment caused by the lingering unresolved debt situation (since 2021), the disease outbreak and the climate-induced food crises in 2024. The Government remained committed and focused on advancing development programmes, in line with the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) with the aim of advancing progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Emphasis was maintained on the implementation of growth sectors, including agriculture, mining and infrastructure, while also improving the service delivery sectors including education, health and social protection.

However, these efforts were significantly undermined by the severe drought that impacted the country more than initially anticipated. The erratic rainfall in 2024 had a devastating effect on both crop and livestock production, with cereal yields expected to decline by nearly 50 percent. The agricultural sector, which employs nearly 70 percent of the labor force and serves as the primary source of income for rural communities, was hit particularly hard. Additionally, the drought led to a substantial reduction in hydropower generation—the country's main source of energy—disrupting economic activity across multiple sectors. As a result, the projected GDP growth for 2024 was revised downward from 4.7 percent to 2.6 percent in the fourth quarter. Despite these challenges, the economy managed to register a 4 percent growth by the end of December.

Key to the economy was the government's achievement of a historical deal on debt restructuring, under the G20 Common Framework. Through this, the Government succeeded in getting over 90 percent of its debt re-negotiated with its creditors thereby providing some fiscal space that enabled service delivery and overall economic development. Zambia's debt restructuring was expected to provide US\$5.8 billion in debt service savings, which would further reduce the debt servicing obligations to around US\$750 million.

To sustain macroeconomic stability while building resilience to shocks, the Government placed significant emphasis on domestic resource mobilization to strengthen fiscal space and support debt sustainability – and indeed as in the previous two years, 2024 saw an increase in tax contributions to the national budget. This ambitious target reflects the government's aspirations for rapid economic expansion, aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability, economic diversification, and improvement in living standards for the people in Zambia.

2. UN SUPPORT TO NATIONAL PRIORITIES THROUGH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

Overview of the Cooperation Framework

The UN Zambia is in the third year of implementing its Cooperation Framework (2023 – 2027). Implementation in 2024 was not very smooth given the two emergencies (cholera outbreak and the severe drought) that the country experienced.

These challenges forced the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to re-programme to address these crises and also implement planned activities. Despite the challenges, the UN made significant progress in supporting Government's priorities as outlined in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) and the Cooperation Framework (CF).

To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the UNCT leveraged the joint programming approach, with agencies pooling resources together and delivering together based on their comparative advantage. A total of 13 Joint Programmes were implemented, many which will continue beyond 2024. To complement these the UN agencies also supported the government through agency specific programmes and initiatives.

The UNCT enhanced strategic oversight of the annual programme through the Joint UN - Government of Zambia Steering Committee (JSC). This JSC which takes place twice a year continued to be a critical forum that reviews progress of the UN programmes in contributing to the 8NDP and provide strategic directions and recommendations to further enhance the UNs work. The forum co-chaired by the RC and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, is composed of all UN Heads of Agencies and Government Permanent Secretaries/Directors.

2.2 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



PROSPERITY PILLAR



8NDP STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:
Economic Transformation and Job Creation



By 2027, all people including the marginalised and vulnerable groups, benefit from an inclusive, resilient and sustainable economy that provides equitable, diverse and sustainable opportunities for decent jobs, livelihoods and businesses



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Over **2,000 youth** received work placements that provided them with practical experience and skills



Supported the development of a new budgeting manual for local authorities to improve their monitoring and reporting



16,000 Social Cash Transfer beneficiary households in **seven districts** accessed subsidized health services through national health insurance scheme



20,085 Adolescents & Young People (AYP) accessed Reproductive Health and HIV services



Operationalized the Mukuba UniPod at Copperbelt University, empowering **100 innovators(73 male & 27 female)** with cutting-edge resources and support for driving innovation & entrepreneurship for sustainable development

The UN focus under the Prosperity Pillar is on inclusive economic transformation, improved productivity and incomes, ensuring opportunities for all.

In 2024, UN support focused on contributing to youth skills development and employment opportunities, accelerating innovations, market accessibility for all including women, refugees and others, introduction of modern agricultural practices, enhancing access to social protection by people with disabilities.

The UN also supported the Government to accelerate financing for development, SDG financing and increased social focus of the national budget allocations.

The UN supported a number of programmes aimed at contributing to economic development and job creation. These included the following:

Enhanced Cross-Border Trade Flows

At the bustling Kasumbalesa border post between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) transformed the trading landscape for small-scale traders. By implementing innovative e-jeton kiosks, the cumbersome and inefficient paper-based jeton system was replaced, addressing longstanding challenges. This bold move has improved cross-border mobility and streamlined operations, with the project timeline now extended into the new year to sustain this impactful development.

Building Resilience in Governance

The United Nations (UN) and the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) took a proactive stance on fiscal matters, conducting in-depth analyses of Zambia's 2024/2025 social sector budget amidst critical challenges, such as drought and cholera. Providing technical support to Parliament, they guided the evaluation of Zambia's budget crisis, spearheading response and recovery strategies to shape future fiscal policies.

Moreover, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), partnering with the Public-Private Sector Development Facility Division (PSDFD) and UNCTAD, empowered senior officials with knowledge and skills in public-private partnerships (PPPs) for sustainable projects. A high-level PPP Council of Ministers meeting fostered collaboration among key ministries, accelerating these pivotal initiatives.

Driving Policy Development

ECA showcased forward-thinking leadership in policy development by contributing to a Policy Manual on Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM) and Zambia's first Handbook on Innovative Finance for Development (INFF). These documents, informed by rigorous policy dialogues, are set to guide Zambia's development agenda, with the INFF Handbook nearing completion by early 2025.

Sustaining Zambia's HIV Response

Through UNAIDS, a landmark achievement unfolded with

Roadmap 2025-2030. Comprehensive strategies addressing political leadership, laws, financing, services, and health systems now pave the way for sustainable health outcomes.

Fostering Trust in Environmental Monitoring

The UN joined hands with the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development, Copperbelt University, ZEMA, and the Centre for Environmental Justice to establish a Participatory Environmental Monitoring framework. This initiative aims to strengthen trust and cooperation between local communities and mining companies, ensuring environmental accountability.

Social Protection at the Core

The finalization and validation of the Social Protection Coordination Strategy marked a significant milestone. Recommendations to align it with the revised National Social Protection Policy ensure coherence and effectiveness in safeguarding Zambia's vulnerable populations.

ILO supported the government to develop and launch of the CASH PLUS strategy to allow beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfers to access additional social protection benefits. The ILO continued supporting the Government through Ministry of Labour and Social Security to extend coverage to the informal economy through the implementing of the extension of social protection to the informal economy and analysing local social security laws.

Promoting Road Safety

The UN supported the development of the Road Safety in Zambia Investment Case, a significant milestone that provides a foundation for public and private sector collaboration to achieve SDGs 3 and 11. Developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Road Transport and Safety Agency and Ministry of Health, this case highlights the impact of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. It presents evidence-based interventions to reduce these incidents, focusing on; Speed Humps-reduce speeding-related accident; Road Crossings-enhance pedestrian safety; Roadside Pathways-protect vulnerable road user; Post-Crash Prehospital Care-improve

emergency response; Alcohol Breath Testing-Deter drunk driving. The Investment Case underscores the need for increased investment in road safety, linking it to health, environmental sustainability, economic growth and equity. By implementing these measures, Zambia can save lives, prevent injuries and support sustainable development.

Empowering Zambia's Youth

Further, with the aim of enhancing job creation, the UN successfully completed the flagship Internship, Volunteer Apprenticeship, and Graduate (IVAG) Programme, which opened doors to over 2,000 (1000 male and 1000 female) youth placements nationwide. These opportunities provided practical work experience and skill development, creating a transformative impact on the lives of Zambia's youth. Support for the second phase is underway.

To inform the creation of Zambia's youth fellowship programme and acquisition of best practices, UNDP facilitated a government-led visit to Nigeria where officials drew inspiration from the country's successful Youth Fellowship Programme.

ILO supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) to host the National Skills, Productivity and Jobs Summit, resulting in 1,000 young people being trained in digital skills with 500 graduates ready to be linked with prospective employers.

Revolutionizing Local Governance

The UN drove advancements in local government policies by supporting the creation of a budgeting manual aligned with Output-Based Budgeting systems. A fiscal reporting framework for 116 local authorities now enables consistent monthly and quarterly reporting on revenue and expenditure. Debt analyses, strategic plans, and policy reviews were set for completion by year-end, strengthening Zambia's governance landscape.

Further efforts included formulating the National Youth Development Strategy, fostering youth engagement through strategic committee meetings, and developing a cutting-edge digital platform with SMART Zambia to connect youths to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. This platform is set to launch in early 2025, linking 26 Youth Resource Centres across the country.

The United Nations and its partners also achieved remarkable progress in enhancing technical support, building capacities, and driving sustainable development across Zambia.

Providing Critical Technical Support

Recognizing the pivotal role of agriculture, the UN partnered with private sector seed companies to provide climate-smart inputs for establishing mega demonstrations. These efforts also extended to building the capacity of women-led Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and cooperatives in establishing mechanization service centres.

To further strengthen agricultural practices, comprehensive training programmes were conducted on diverse topics such as post-harvest loss management, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and food processing. Targeted staff from the Ministries of Agriculture and Community Development, as well as implementing partner organizations, were equipped with vital knowledge and skills.

Additionally, training of trainers (TOT) programmes on savings for change and market systems approaches reached 4,000 savings groups and an estimated 80,000 individuals, including 2,740 smallholder farmers (73% women). These efforts not only strengthened financial and digital literacy but also empowered trained participants to disseminate knowledge within their communities.

In collaboration with key institutions like the Ministry of Mines and the University of Zambia, the UN facilitated the development of an Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining manual. This guide enhanced safety, environmental protection, and productivity in small-scale mining operations, further bolstering sustainable practices in the sector.

Strengthening Inclusive Policy Monitoring and Gender-Responsive Governance

In promoting inclusive and decentralized development, the UN enhanced capacity in gender, disability, and adolescent programming. A significant milestone was achieved with the National Assembly of Zambia, where Members of Parliament were empowered through training in sector budget analysis, borrowing plans, and gender-responsive budgeting. These initiatives now enable better scrutiny of national and sector budgets, positively impacting children and families across the country.

At the local governance level, Principal Officers of Local



Authorities underwent orientation sessions focused on Output-Based Budgeting (OBB), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and Leadership. This knowledge strengthened participatory planning, leadership abilities, and overall governance frameworks, ensuring effective implementation at the grassroots level.

Advancing Environmental Economic Accounting

UNDP, in partnership with the World Bank, supported the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP) in developing Systems of Environment Economic Accounting (SEEA) sector accounts for tourism, water, forestry, and land. These accounts were integral to national planning, enabling informed environmental and economic decision-making. Progress continued with the Natural Capital Accounting Strategy set to advance further.

Providing Critical Technical Support

To harmonize national frameworks, the UN assisted the government in aligning the National Planning and Budgeting Act with the Urban and Regional Planning Act. Development of guidelines and stakeholder consultations progressed, with a launch expected by late 2025.

The UN also supported MoFNP in monitoring the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), ensuring that commitments were tracked, evaluated, and comprehensively reported.

Provincial implementation plans under the 8NDP were finalized, with accessibility ensured through print and electronic dissemination. Complete rollout of these plans was planned for early 2025.

Collaboration between UNDP, UNICEF, and ZIPAR resulted in

the 2025 National Budget Analysis, producing evidence-based briefs on disability and gender. These findings informed national policy discussions, ensuring inclusivity and responsiveness within Zambia's fiscal strategies.

Institutional Capacity Enhancement:

ILO facilitated the Institutional Capacity Assessment of the Technical, Education, Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) resulting in the development of the TEVETA Capacity Development Strategy (2024-2027). ILO supported TEVETA in implementing its Capacity Development Strategy and procured equipment worth about \$90,000.

The UN through ILO, supported the National Health Insurance scheme to improve data management and efficiency in monitoring scheme operations.

Economic Sector Skills Anticipation and Coordination:

To enhance sector coordination aimed at reducing skills matches and gaps, the ILO supported the government through the Ministry of Technology and Science (MOTS) with establishment of Mining sector Skills Body (SSB) – a body which will comprise of public, private, civil society, education.

A Sectoral Review Study and Draft Sector Skills Strategy for the Agriculture and completed which identified and categorizes the occupational and skills needs for the Agriculture Sector in four sectors (Horticulture, Aquaculture, Field Crops and Livestock).

A Sectoral Review Study which identified and categorizes the occupational and skills needs for the Energy Sector in three segments (Renewable Energy, Transmission & Distribution and Energy Services.)

With an unwavering commitment to sustainable development and economic empowerment, significant strides have been made across various sectors in Zambia, bringing to life inspiring stories of progress and impact.

Harnessing Digital Technology for Growth and Opportunity

The development of the e-business directory, spearheaded by the FAO, stands as a testament to the potential of digital platforms in driving entrepreneurial success. Set to become operational by the second quarter of 2025, this initiative promises to connect businesses with wider markets, fostering growth and collaboration.

Meanwhile, the Maano - Virtual Farmers' Market platform, developed by the WFP in partnership with the private sector, has revolutionized market access for smallholder farmers and micro-entrepreneurs. By bridging the gap between sellers and buyers, this digital platform now also includes modules for 'access to finance' and 'access to insurance,' empowering farmers in remote areas with critical financial tools and security.

Nurturing Innovation Through Collaboration

The spirit of innovation is alive and thriving, driven by collaborative efforts between government, private sector, civil society, and academic institutions. A shining



example is the Mukuba UniPod at Copperbelt University, which has already hosted three innovation programmes, attracting over 230 applications and benefiting around 100 young innovators with cutting-edge facilities and expert guidance. Looking ahead, a fourth programme – the SDG Hackathon – is scheduled for 2025, set to inspire even more creative breakthroughs.

Building Resilience in Agriculture and Climate Adaptation

To address the challenges posed by climate change, capacity-building training was conducted for 120 Ministry of Agriculture Extension Staff across 12 districts. These efforts enhanced the dissemination of climate-smart technologies, equipping communities with the tools to adapt to environmental changes.

In Rufunsa and Chongwe districts, irrigation equipment was installed at two Centres of Excellence, enabling year-round production and increasing resilience to droughts. Complementing these efforts, inputs and training were provided to smallholder farmers across 27 districts, resulting in the establishment of 555 Farmer Field Schools in over 30 districts, reaching an impressive 40,000 farmers.

Enhancing Market Access and Empowering Smallholder Farmers

The WFP facilitated valuable partnerships between smallholder farmers and key input suppliers, such as SeedCo, Good Nature, and Yara, as well as mechanization suppliers like CAMCO and Green 2000. The SheCan project expanded from 8 to 26 districts, providing farmers with access to finance for livelihood diversification and climate-resilient technologies.

Through the WFP's market systems development model, 2,150 farmers – including 55% women and 39% youth – successfully traded 397 metric tons of crops valued at USD 106,471. This remarkable achievement highlights the power of collective action and value chain development in transforming lives.



Broadening Financial Access for Rural Communities

To ensure inclusive financial opportunities, 249 savings groups from target districts were linked to financial service providers such as ZANACO, Vision Fund, and the Constituency Development Fund. By broadening access to resources, these efforts enabled investments in productive assets, empowering communities to thrive.

BENEFICIARY VOICES

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 sunflowers, 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, she recounts. 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.



PEOPLE PILLAR



8NDP STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:
Human and Social Development



By 2027, all people in Zambia, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, have equitable access to and utilisation of quality, inclusive and gender- and shock-responsive universal social services.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Over **80,000 adolescents and young people** were reached with HIV testing, prevention, and treatment services



122,574 learners in grades 3-5 reached with the Catch-up Programme, 8,000 users benefited from the Learning Passport initiative
40,153 learners reached with **skills development programs**



1,883,834 vaccinated against cholera and **3,912,053 children vaccinated** under five against polio



1.3 million households, with **952,570** receiving drought emergency cash transfers.
3,560,878 people reached with drought response

Under the People Pillar, the UN works to improve the well-being of Zambians by addressing and integrating service provision for health, education and skills with a focus on the present and the future. In addition to strengthening systems, social protection and human capabilities, the UN supports critical transformations aimed at fostering the resilience of people and systems to the effects of climate change and other crises, including public health emergencies.

In 2024, the UN supported 1.3 million households through social cash transfers, millions of vulnerable children enhancing nutrition daily intake, and provide assistance and/or opportunities for the most left behind, including people with disabilities, women victims of GBV, fistula survivors, refugees and migrants, particularly vulnerable to HIV, health and education services accessibility barriers, unemployment and climate crisis shocks.

Under the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection-II, capacity-building workshops and training sessions were conducted in the Eastern and Western provinces, equipping traditional leaders with the knowledge about human rights, including the promotion of disability inclusion within their communities.

In the face of climate-induced and public health emergencies like drought, cholera, measles, polio, and Mpox, Zambia showcased resilience and determination in overcoming challenges to its service delivery systems. The United Nations spearheaded impactful initiatives across health, education, social protection, and nutrition, ensuring progress despite adversity.

Improved Access to Social Services

Significant improvements in health outcomes were achieved. Life expectancy at birth rose dramatically from 55.7 years in 2018 to 63.5 years in 2024. Maternal mortality rates saw a notable decline, dropping from 252 to 187 deaths per 100,000 live births. Additionally, child mortality rates were reduced owing to interventions supported by the UN, including increasing the number of skilled health personnel assisting births. Stunting among children also decreased from 34.6 percent in 2018 to 32 percent in 2024.

Efforts to enhance equitable access to education yielded promising results, with more children achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. This progress reaffirmed Zambia and the UN's joint commitment to ensuring inclusive and quality education for all.

Increased Social Sector Budget Allocation

Acknowledging the importance of financial support during times of crisis, Zambia increased its social sector budget allocation from 4% in 2020 to 5.4% in 2024. This enabled the expansion of programs like the Social Cash Transfer, which directly benefitted over 1.3 million households. Among these, 952,570 households received emergency drought assistance, safeguarding livelihoods in the most affected districts.

Support extended beyond Zambian citizens, encompassing forcibly displaced individuals. The launch of Zambia's National Refugee Policy further ensured access to vital social services for refugees and host communities alike, reflecting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to social welfare.

Health System Strengthening

Healthcare systems saw remarkable advancements. The UN's initiatives empowered hospitals to implement standardized disease management and patient care protocols in 35 facilities nationwide. Cholera immunization campaigns vaccinated over 1.8 million individuals, while polio campaigns reached 3.9 million children under five. Vaccine availability remained stable, with no national stockouts reported, and a low dropout rate of just 2% between DPT-1 and DPT-3 doses.

Focused efforts to address malnutrition resulted in the treatment of 12,683 children under five for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 34,211 for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) across 84 districts. A monthly average of 718,000 children were screened for acute malnutrition. Beyond direct treatment, 47,755 caregivers were counseled on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E), benefitting over 2 million caregivers—a vital step in ensuring better health outcomes for children.

GBV Prevention and HIV Response

In addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV, the UN fostered awareness and access to vital services. Campaigns targeted over 80,000 young people, increasing demand for services at more than 50 adolescent-friendly health facilities. Volunteer programs trained 162

individuals in sexual and reproductive health, human rights, migration health, and GBV, fostering peer-to-peer education initiatives. These efforts enhanced access to services like PrEP, HIV testing, and condom distribution, bridging critical gaps in healthcare.

Strengthened Capacities for Delivering Quality Social Services

Health Sector

Recognizing the importance of sustainable change, the UN adopted a systems approach to strengthen Zambia's capacity in delivering quality social services. By finalizing the National Operational Plan and reinforcing the Ministry of Health's Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) unit, strides were made toward eliminating vertical transmission of HIV and other diseases. Additionally, the development of the National Quality and Patient Safety Strategy aligned with Zambia's Health Strategic Plan 2022–2026 served as a major milestone, ensuring that healthcare outcomes continue to improve.

Updated training manuals also equipped healthcare workers to better serve adolescents, ensuring their unique health needs were met with quality care.



The UN supported forecasting, supply planning, and monitoring of vaccine stock levels to prevent stock-outs. Initiatives like Thrive360 reporting, cold chain inventory assessments, and the revision of the Effective Vaccine Management Continuous Improvement Plan (EVM-cIP) expanded cold chain capacity, improving vaccine delivery and coverage.

The UN played an instrumental role in the Measles Rubella Supplemental Immunization Activity guidelines, ensuring adherence to global best practices. The launch of long-acting injectable Cabotegravir (CAB-LA) for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis benefited approximately 2,500 Zambians, including adolescents, young people, key populations, and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

The UN strengthened Zambia's capacity to manage emerging infectious diseases through technical assistance in Applied Veterinary Epidemiology, targeting 57 frontline animal health staff.

UNFPA supported the government with completion of Data collection for District Carrying Capacity Assessment which will be used as an input in the formulation of the next medium and Long-Term National Plans and will guide the development of various National policies, Plans and Strategies including the provincial and district plans.

The Joint UN Team on HIV&AIDS (JUNTA) supported the development of key policy documents, including the National HIV Prevention Roadmap 2025–2030, the Zambia Education Plus Investment Case 2025–2030, and the National Adolescent Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) training packages were developed to address the mental health needs of young people.

Over 80,000 adolescents and young people were reached with HIV testing, prevention, and treatment services through mass awareness campaigns, provided through over 50 adolescent-friendly health facilities.

Quality Education in Emergency Settings

The UN partnered with the Ministry of Education to develop teaching and learning materials for continued education during emergencies. In addition, 1,380 teachers were trained to deliver lessons through television and online platforms.

Furthermore, the UN supported the creation of an implementation plan for the Emergency School Feeding Programme, facilitating decentralized food commodity procurement for home-grown school meals in 70 targeted districts. The UN's collaboration with the Ministry of Education enabled the implementation of decentralized procurement for Home-Grown School Meals, ensuring greater access to diverse, nutritious food for learners.



Social Protection

The UN's support reached over 1.3 million households, with 952,570 receiving drought emergency cash transfers. The approval of the National Social Protection Policy and the operationalisation of the SCT Monitoring and Evaluation framework marked important milestones. A drought enumeration tool was developed to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in emergency response efforts.

The UN continued providing support for the Joint Programme on Social Protection; developed the drought enumeration tool and data capture on 1000-day children, ensuring their inclusion in the drought emergency cash transfer (D-ECT) and automated the ECT management information system (MIS), streamlining payments. The UN also concluded an agreement with the government for the inclusion of 4,000 forcibly displaced households into the Government SCT programme.

In collaboration with the World Bank, the UN provided technical inputs to conceptualizing a Social Registry for Zambia. Also facilitated a South-to-South learning exchange between Zambia and Türkiye, exploring key considerations for developing a Social Registry and enhanced the nutrition module of the MIS to support the registration of beneficiaries under the 1,000 Days Pilot within the Cash Plus initiative.

Strengthened Capacity for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health & Nutrition (RMNCAHN) Services

Through coordinated capacity-building efforts, the UN has greatly enhanced healthcare delivery in Zambia, achieving notable improvements in maternal, newborn, and reproductive health outcomes.

Maternal, Newborn, and Reproductive Health

The UN procured and delivered **44 percent of the required reproductive health commodities**, ensuring consistent access to vital supplies. Capacity initiatives included the training of **447 health care providers** in key areas such as Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care, Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives, Respectful Maternity Care, and Comprehensive Abortion Care.

Midwifery training for **64 nurses** and successful fistula surgeries for **54 survivors** further improved maternal care services. At **eight Centres of Excellence**, **310 healthcare workers** received training in life-saving interventions, while **883 staff** received mentorship, benefiting over **10,000 sick newborns**. Among them, **1,867 newborns** were resuscitated, and **461 low-birth-weight infants** received Kangaroo Mother Care.

The UN also contributed to the development of Newborn Standard Operating Procedures and Paediatric HIV Protocols, enhancing neonatal and paediatric care across health facilities.

The Government and UNFPA signed the Compact of Commitment in January 2023. Since then, the government has disbursed more than USD7.1 million from the treasury for Third Party Procurement of reproductive health commodities. USD2.7 million was disbursed in 2023 and USD4.4 million was released in 2024. Launched in 2022, the UNFPA Supplies Match Fund is a financing mechanism to match additional government contributions for procurement of contraceptives. In 2024, UNFPA matched domestically raised resources on a 1:2 ratio capped at USD2 million.

The Ministry of Health, supported by the UN, strengthened its **Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) unit** and developed the **National Quality and Patient Safety Strategy**, aligned with Zambia's 2022–2026 National Health Strategic Plan. The Ministry's quality improvement training manuals were updated, with a special focus on adolescent health.

Private Sector Engagement

The UN partnered with the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) and the National AIDS Network to develop a **Private Sector Engagement Strategy** on HIV and wellness. Additionally, collaborations with the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions and the National AIDS Council led to the creation of **HIV and Workplace Wellness Guidelines** tailored for the informal economy.

UNOPS, in collaboration with the Global Fund, is actively engaged in a significant project to enhance oxygen production capacity within Zambia's healthcare system. This initiative involves the construction of Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants in six key hospitals: St Paul's Mission Hospital-Nchelenge (Luapula Province), Kasama General Hospital (Northern Province), Kabwe Central Hospital (Central Province), Chinsali General Hospital (Muchinga Province), Kalindawalo General Hospital (Eastern Province), and the National Heart Hospital (Lusaka Province). The total investment in this crucial infrastructure development amounts to USD 10,482,381. Notably, the PSA oxygen plant at the National Heart Hospital in Lusaka has already been successfully commissioned. This project underscores a commitment to strengthening critical care services and ensuring a sustainable supply of medical oxygen to meet patient needs across several provinces in Zambia. The progress of this initiative will be closely monitored to ensure the timely completion and operationalization of the remaining five oxygen plants.

Primary Healthcare System Strengthening

The UN advanced vaccine access by procuring **439 vaccine refrigerators** and **3,300 vaccine carriers**. Vaccination campaigns reached **2.2 million children with nOPV2**, **4 million children with MR vaccines**, and **1.88 million people** in cholera-prone areas. The UN also supported the government's Big Catch-Up plan, restoring vaccination coverage to pre-pandemic levels, reaching **3.9 million children** with the bivalent oral polio vaccine and **1.08 million children** with IPV.

Efforts to solarize 200 health facilities, implement eLMIS, and deliver last-mile vaccines via the DRIVE initiative improved healthcare services, enhanced health worker retention, and boosted climate resilience in rural areas.

HIV Prevention and Treatment

The UN's Joint UN Team on AIDS (JUNTA) supported the development of key frameworks, including the **Zambia HIV Prevention Roadmap (2025–2030)**, **Education Plus Investment Case (2025–2030)**, and the **National Adolescent Social and Behaviour Change Package**.

With support from the Global Fund and UNAIDS, UNFPA successfully trained more than 400 nightclub owners, sex workers, and community members in demand generation and condom distribution under the Expanded People-Centered Condom Programme. This initiative has strengthened the sustainability of last-mile condom distribution, ensuring consistent access to condoms in hard-to-reach and high-risk areas.

In 2024, UNFPA working with other partners established **382 Condom distribution points** out of the targeted 600 hotspots. This was done through geospatial hotspot mapping and assessment that provided insight into the distribution rollout.

Adolescent-friendly health services provided in **50 facilities** reached **83,542 individuals**. The RAPHIZ programme focused on reducing adolescent pregnancies and new HIV infections in two high-burden districts.

To empower young people, **71 adolescent girls and young women** received training in climate-smart agriculture and entrepreneurship, while **50 young men and community gatekeepers** were trained as Gender Champions to promote positive masculinity.

The UN spearheaded the adoption and launch of **long-acting injectable Cabotegravir (CAB-LA)** for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), reaching **2,500 Zambians**. Technical support was provided for developing normative guidance on its introduction and monitoring, targeting key populations.

Innovative radio and TV campaigns promoted health-seeking behaviors, expanding access to HIV testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), viral load testing, TB therapy, hepatitis B services, and PrEP. In addition, **23 workplace champions** from trading areas in the capital city, Lusaka, were trained to raise awareness of HIV services, boosting outreach.

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Strengthened Data Systems and Evidence

The UN made significant contributions to improving data systems and evidence-based policy-making in Zambia:

- Supported pivotal national surveys, including the **Census of Population and housing, ZDHS, LCMS**, national AIDS spectrum estimates, and SMART survey.
- Partnered with the Ministry of Health and the University of Zambia to analyze maternal death trends using MPDSR data, informing programmatic decisions and driving policy reforms.
- Collaborated with the Ministry of Education to address the **2022–2023 education data gap** via EMIS data analysis, resulting in reports that guide sector planning.
- Assisted the Ministry of Finance and National Planning in developing a national research repository, creating an integrated platform for policymakers to access critical data and evidence.
- Facilitated the release of the **Food Consumption and Micronutrient Deficiency Survey** and developed the **2024 HIV Estimates** to inform health initiatives.
- Conducted a disability assessment in Mantapala Refugee Settlement, enabling the inclusion of **239 individuals** in the national database. Additionally, a new indicator on forcibly displaced learners was integrated into the education census questionnaire to support inclusive planning.

Education Sector Successes

Zambia's "Education for All" policy significantly boosted enrolment in pre-primary and secondary education. Complementing this, the UN supported targeted initiatives:

- The Catch-Up Program provided tailored instruction to students in Grades 3-5, reaching **122,574 children** and offering special support to forcibly displaced learners.
- Expanded the Learning Passport digital platform, enabling **8,000 users** to access quality resources. Partnerships with Airtel increased digital learning opportunities for over **9,000 learners**.
- Skills development programmes benefited **40,153 learners**, providing career guidance and employability skills critical for Zambia's workforce.
- UNICEF and UNESCO collaborated to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills for children, ensuring more robust learning outcomes.

Early Childhood Development and Education

Early childhood care and education were strengthened through collaborative efforts:

- Finalized and launched key ECE resources, including the **National Quality Standards (NQS), Early Childhood Assessment Tool (ECAT), and Quality Early Learning Education Resources (QELER) guide**.
- Developed a harmonized **play-based pedagogy guide** and operationalized an **ECE e-catalogue/library** to improve learning resources.



- Transitioned to an electronic ECD data collection system, aligned with the district health information system in three districts to strengthen data systems.
- Scaled ECD hubs, reaching **31,205 children (0–8 years) and 53,156 caregivers** through home visits, group counseling, and outreach initiatives, including Child Health Week activities.

Primary Education

The UN enhanced primary education quality and inclusiveness:

- Strengthened education sector coordination and emergency response through the **Joint Sector Review** and Education Working Group on Emergencies.
- Finalized the **National Teacher Policy**, trained **110 teachers** in gender-responsive pedagogy, and provided social dialogue training to **400 in-service teachers**.
- Supported 31 teachers across refugee settlements, ensuring the inclusion of displaced learners.
- Facilitated school feeding for **4,111 primary learners**, improving attendance and health outcomes.
- Distributed over **1,200 children's books** and trained educators to manage inclusive school libraries, promoting accessibility to quality learning materials.

Improved Capacity for Secondary Education and Skills Development

The UN expanded access to secondary education and skills development programmes:

- Career education and on-the-job learning initiatives reached **40,153 learners** (20,613 females and 19,540 males) across five provinces.
- Private sector partnerships enabled internships, mentorship, and job shadowing for **245 learners** in Lusaka and Katete.
- Promoted STEM education through **STEM career clubs** in 25 Lusaka schools, encouraging girls to pursue STEM fields.
- Supported entrepreneurship and skills development training for **244 young people** (157 females and 87 males), equipping them with start-up kits to foster innovation.

Enhanced Youth Involvement and Participation

The UN made significant strides in empowering Zambian youths by supporting the update of Zambia's National Youth Policy, launched by the Republican President, reinforcing the government's commitment to youth development. Further contributions included:

- Formulating the National Youth Development Strategy, providing a clear roadmap for youth empowerment initiatives.
- Donating computer equipment to national youth resource centers and facilitating digital literacy training for over 100 youths, equipping them with vital skills for the digital age.
- Establishing the Youth Connekt Zambia Chapter, which engaged over 500 youth participants in leadership activities and connected them to global platforms such as the Continental Youth Connekt Africa Summit in Rwanda.
- Placing approximately 500 youth interns in various sectors, including government, the UN, and the private sector. Out of 2,000 beneficiaries of the Youth Programme, over 200 youths secured permanent employment, demonstrating the initiative's direct impact on employability and livelihoods.

Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE)

The UN played a key role in strengthening life skills and health education in Zambia through:

- Supporting pilot training in the In-School LSHE framework for teachers and administrators across four districts, contributing to its validation.
- Facilitating Training of Trainers (TOT) for youth networks, CSOs, and resource center managers for the Out-of-School LSHE framework, with revision planned for 2025.
- Training 6,335 in-service teachers and 1,456 pre-service teachers, using teacher training colleges as hubs for capacity building. This effort enhanced sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in higher education, enabling HIV testing for 12,134 students.
- Engaging 55 MPs under the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) Programme to advocate for LSHE policies

and strengthen community integration of LSHE initiatives.

Financial Transparency and Governance

The UN bolstered financial transparency and governance through various initiatives:

- Established a fiscal reporting framework for local authorities across all 116 districts in the country, ensuring regular reporting to enhance accountability.
- Conducted a midyear social sector budget analysis to address resource gaps related to drought and cholera impacts.
- Trained Members of Parliament in sector budget analysis, annual borrowing plans, and gender-responsive budgeting, and supported the development of Zambia's HIV Response Sustainability Roadmap – Vision 2030.



- Strengthened the capacity of 60 Organizations for Persons with Disabilities in inclusive budgeting, tracking, and financial management.

Advancing Services for Persons with Disabilities

The UN's efforts significantly enhanced disability inclusion in Zambia through:

- Developing a rights-based disability assessment tool, creating inclusive anti-cholera messaging, and equipping organizations with knowledge on SRH, HIV, and GBV.
- Training 68 nurses and midwives in Basic Sign Language, thereby addressing healthcare barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Promoting disability inclusion across policies and programmes to ensure that the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed into national development.
- Issuing certification and disability cards to 119,909 persons, facilitating their access to services and opportunities.
- Finalizing the Assistive Products Prioritized List and harmonizing national guidelines for Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID).

The UN's support significantly strengthened Zambia's capacity to deliver quality, inclusive, and gender-responsive social services, ensuring vulnerable populations had access to essential services and opportunities.

Education and Disability Inclusion

The UN's collaboration with the government yielded notable achievements in inclusive education:

- Trained 60 teachers to deliver LSHE for learners with disabilities, benefiting 4,500 learners.
- Developed a comprehensive training handbook on national planning, budgeting, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E), amplifying the participation of persons with disabilities in national development.

Strengthened Capacity for Climate-Resilient and Equitable WASH Services

Policy and Strategy Development

The UN contributed to significant policy advancements by supporting the launch of the National Water Policy, its implementation plan, the Zambia Water Investment Strategy, and the WASH Equity and Inclusion Guidelines. To enhance water management and sustainability, development plans were created for commercial utilities, while five commercial utilities and six districts were trained in WASH data collection, analysis, reporting, and decision-making.

WASH System Strengthening

The integration of climate considerations into WASH initiatives was strengthened through the completion of a policy analysis report. Additionally, a peer reviewed article was published on recent and future exposure of water, sanitation, and hygiene systems to climate-related hazards in Zambia. The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Report identified financing and institutional gaps in WASH services, providing opportunities for improvement.

To enhance WASH infrastructure, a WASH Facility Improvement Tool (FIT) training initiative was conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Health, benefiting 357 sub-district staff through cascade training sessions.



Safe Water and Sanitation Services

The UN significantly improved access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services, impacting 4,155,826 people. Key achievements included:

- Rehabilitating 567 boreholes and constructing 287 new boreholes to ensure reliable water sources.
- Establishing 126 community Cholera Oral Rehydration Corners, benefiting 81,171 individuals, including 14,571 children under five.

Empowering Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

Integrated Health Services

The UN expanded access to integrated HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services:

- Trained 162 community volunteers (97 females and 65 males) in SRHR, human rights, migration health, and GBV.
- Empowered community-led organizations in three provinces through microplanning to enhance peer-to-peer demand creation for HIV services, testing, and access to condoms and PrEP.
- 240,000 people over 85% women and adolescent girls received integrated SRH, GBV and HIV services including family planning commodities, HIV testing and STI medication in eastern, western and southern provinces which were worst hit by the drought through mobile clinics.
- Supported the Maternal and Newborn Health Summit, which built the capacity of 45 healthcare providers in delivering integrated SRHR, HIV, and GBV services.

- Strengthened adolescent health programming in 10 districts by training peer educators to promote SRHR and GBV services through engagement and outreach.

- Local governments in two high-burden districts received transformational leadership training to promote a youth-led, multisectoral approach to integrated health services.

Access to Health and Nutrition Services

The UN's initiatives significantly enhanced access to essential health and nutrition services:

- Supported 275 health facilities in 17 Scaling Up Nutrition districts, training 3,384 health workers and distributing over USD 6 million worth of reproductive health commodities.
- Equipped 15 facilities in Luapula Province with eLMIS, improving logistics and reducing stockouts.
- Community awareness programmes reached 22,553 beneficiaries with accurate SRH information, and 3,171 individuals (1,968 females, 1,203 males) accessed SRH services through referrals.

To promote nutrition, the UN piloted a Community Behaviour Tracking Mechanism in two drought-affected districts, monitoring behavior change and facilitating community dialogues. Training modules were also developed for the treatment of severe wasting, benefiting 17 districts.

Expanded Access to WASH Services

The UN made substantial progress in expanding water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services across Zambia:

- Strengthened the capacity of DWASHE, EHT, APM, and VWASHE committees in eight provinces, ensuring sustainable operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure.
- During humanitarian cholera and drought responses, with the support of the UN as WASH cluster co-lead, a total of 6.4 million people were reached with multi-sectoral messaging on drought response and access to services through mass media and house-to-house campaigns. Additionally, 467,250 people gained access to safe water through the rehabilitation and drilling of boreholes, as well as the construction of water schemes. Approximately 100,000 people had access to sanitation facilities. 183,750 drought affected people received critical WASH supplies
- Enabled 31,630 households to install or upgrade handwashing facilities, improving hygiene for 158,150 people, and supported 30,864 households to improve toilet facilities, benefiting 154,320 individuals.
- Expanded access to safe drinking water for 101,250 people through the construction of 158 new boreholes and rehabilitation of 245 existing ones.
- Improved WASH facilities in 495 schools (including 107 new boreholes and supplies for 388 cholera-affected schools) and 116 healthcare facilities, boosting resilience and public health.



Social Protection Through the Cash-Plus Initiative

In response to growing vulnerabilities, particularly due to drought, the UN scaled up social protection interventions:

- Extended cash transfers to 952,570 households following the February 2024 drought emergency, providing critical support through April 2025.
- Provided nutrition-sensitive cash top-ups to 34,000 households with pregnant and lactating women and young children in nine high-priority districts.
- Launched the Cash-Plus pilot intervention, integrating cash assistance with nutrition and gender-responsive services under the Most Critical 1000 Days Programme—a first step toward more holistic social protection.

Empowering Key and Vulnerable Populations

The UN significantly strengthened access to integrated health, rights, and protection services for marginalized communities:

Integrated HIV, SRHR, and GBV Services

Enabled Zambia's participation in the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines, improving treatment availability.

Built capacity of 162 community volunteers (97 women, 65 men) and 20 frontline workers to deliver inclusive SRHR, migration health, and GBV prevention services under the Knows-No-Borders programme.

Empowered local organizations in Kabwe, Lusaka, and Livingstone through microplanning, increasing access to HIV testing, condom distribution, and PrEP.

Enhanced awareness on HIV and SRHR in refugee settlements through community-led sensitization initiatives.

Integrated Health Services and Youth Engagement

- Trained 45 healthcare providers in Central Province to deliver integrated SRHR, HIV, and GBV services.
- Supported 10 districts in rolling out adolescent health programmes, including training peer educators for youth-led SRHR and GBV engagement.
- Delivered transformational leadership training to local

governments in Monze and Katete to spearhead a youth-centered, multisectoral response.

UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health to provide integrated SRHR/GBV/HIV/PSEA services through mobile clinics, targeting underserved communities and hard-to-reach areas that have been affected by drought in Southern, Western and Eastern Provinces. The mobile clinics reached more than 240,000 people. Services provided included maternal health care, family planning, treatment for people living with HIV and GBV counselling, nutrition and general health checks. Numerous women received antenatal and postnatal care, with some making their first visit within the critical first trimester.

As food insecurity increased, cooking lessons using locally available produce (seeds, nuts etc.) were integrated into outreach activities.

Improved Access to Essential Health and Nutrition Services

The UN bolstered the health and nutrition system, improving care delivery and outcomes:

- Strengthened 275 health facilities across 17 Scaling Up Nutrition districts, training 3,384 health workers and rolling out SAM and MIYCN programs.
- Delivered over USD 6 million in reproductive health commodities to ZAMMSA and equipped 15 facilities in Luapula Province with eLMIS to enhance supply chain efficiency.
- Reached 22,553 people with accurate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information, while 3,171 individuals (1,968 females, 1,203 males) accessed SRH services through targeted referrals.





Enhanced Capacity for Nutritional Behavioural Change

The UN piloted a Community Behaviour Tracking Mechanism in two drought-affected districts to monitor nutrition behaviours and facilitate community dialogues. Rolled out a Community Rapid Assessment to gather feedback on the SUN II programme.

Training modules were developed for severe wasting treatment, equipping 17 districts. Translated materials into seven local languages to support agriculture extension and social protection systems. Key Social Behaviour Change and Communication

materials were also translated to enhance utilization. Through 1,681 VLSAs, nutrition messaging reached 13,700 women of reproductive age. The UN supported government in reaching 127,000 individuals with SBCC efforts and trained 60,030 households in food processing and preservation. Food assistance was provided prioritizing pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Drought Response and Resilience Building

Following the 2023/24 drought, which severely impacted national and household food security, the UN launched initiatives to support vulnerable households. A total of 33,061 households were in nutrient-dense crop production and provided essential crop inputs to 7,750 households.

Additionally, 46,376 lead farmers were trained in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, food safety, and climate-smart practices. The Ministry of Agriculture, with UN support, also trained 1,001 lead farmers in seed multiplication and provided inputs to 49 others. An additional 8,730 beneficiaries received critical inputs.

Poultry production expanded through the Chicken Pass-on-the-Gift programme, benefiting 9,086 households, and provided fish fingerlings to 7,516 households, promoting food security and climate-resilient agriculture.

The UN played a crucial role in Zambia's response to the largest cholera outbreak on record, affecting 72 out of 116 districts. Established 126 community Cholera Oral Rehydration Corners, reaching 81,171 individuals. Procured 45 Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) kits and 1.3 million Oral Rehydration Solution sachets. Trained 510 community-based volunteers and 72 health workers in case management.

Approximately 1,883,834 people (99.2 percent coverage) across five cholera-affected districts were successfully vaccinated under the Oral Cholera Vaccine campaign which was part of a comprehensive public health effort, coordinated by the UN and supported by partners. Resources were mobilized through various funding sources to enhance cholera control measures and address other humanitarian health emergencies.



The UN supported the government in cluster coordination, resource mobilization, and response efforts, co-leading the Health, Nutrition, Education, Protection, and WASH clusters. 55 districts were assisted in developing epidemic preparedness and response plans.

In response to the severe drought, WASH interventions reached 112,500 people across 11 districts, including the rehabilitation of 138 boreholes and distribution of hygiene kits to 19,200 households and promoted critical hygiene practices through Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities, reaching an estimated 2.2 million people.

Through Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition, 763 health workers and 4,175 CBVs were trained, treatment was given to 24,277 children for Severe Acute Malnutrition and there was a roll out supplementary feeding programmes for 24,277 malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under five.

The UN enhanced iCCM in eight drought-affected districts by training 240 CBVs and 160 healthcare workers. Supplied AWD kits, acute respiratory infection timers, and materials for iCCM training to 20 drought-affected districts. SMART surveys were conducted across six provinces to prioritize drought response activities, guiding strategic interventions in collaboration with local stakeholders and organizations.

These efforts significantly strengthened the resilience of people and used innovative approaches to prevent and reduce the impact of shocks and crises on access to and utilization of quality services in Zambia.

Strengthened Capacities for Health and Nutrition Emergencies

Community-Based Disaster Preparedness

The UN helped establish a community-based disaster preparedness model, engaging local communities in response planning and strengthening local civil protection structures. This enhanced the capacity of disaster-prone

areas to manage and respond to future crises.

The Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) received support in establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework and developed district contingency plans, improving national preparedness for future emergencies.

Following International Health Regulations recommended risk assessments, the country developed its 2nd National Action Plan for Health Security, guiding public health emergency preparedness and response for five years.

The UN through FAO, UNEP, WHO, and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) supported a multi-country One Health Cross-border simulation exercise in Zambia, testing and identifying capacities and gaps in emergency preparedness and response.

Enhanced Social Protection System

The UN enhanced national and community disaster preparedness in Zambia, enabling better anticipation and response to multi-hazard risks. In the same line, disaster awareness activities were conducted in Gwembe District, reaching 1,708 community members and establishing 19 satellite centers to improve early warning systems.

The Zambia Meteorological Department was supported in refining the 2024/25 seasonal weather forecast, translating it into seven local languages and disseminating it to 143,415 smallholder farmers.

In response to the drought emergency, the UN trained 108 Ministry of Education staff from 36 districts to implement emergency school feeding programmes, benefiting 2.3 million learners. Additionally, the UN trained 38 government and implementing staff in Seasonal Livelihood Programming and Community-Based Participatory Planning to strengthen early warning systems and community resilience.

Multisectoral Nutrition Programmes

The UN supported Nutrition Support Groups reached 307,249 households of pregnant and breastfeeding women and children 6-23 months across 17 districts



with multi-sectoral nutrition interventions for stunting reduction. Emergency coordination expanded to 20 districts, training 763 health workers and 4,175 Community-Based Volunteers in Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition, reaching 1,208 health facilities. Treated 24,277 children for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), up from 15,551 in 2023 and in 26 priority districts, 5,226 children treated for SAM.

With support from the UN, secured a \$1.3 million allocation for Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and assisted the government in drafting the 2024 Fill the Nutrient Gap report. Strengthened women's financial inclusion through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) and launched the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network to enhance private sector engagement in nutrition initiatives.

BENEFICIARY VOICES



Zambia Country Team Engages Disability Organizations to Strengthen Inclusion Efforts

Zambia Country Team Engages Disability Organizations to Strengthen Inclusion Efforts

On 11 December 2024, the United Nations (UN) Country Team in Zambia, in collaboration with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, convened a consultative meeting in Lusaka with over 50 representatives of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The gathering centered on advancing partnerships for disability inclusion and reaffirmed the UN's commitment to the principles of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), launched by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in 2019.

UNDIS serves as the cornerstone for transformative and sustainable progress on disability inclusion across all pillars of the UN's work. With the participation of UN agencies, the meeting provided a crucial platform for dialogue, fostering collaboration and innovation while addressing persistent barriers to inclusion.

A Foundation for Equity

In her opening remarks, UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Ms. Beatrice Mutali, underscored the intrinsic link between disability inclusion and sustainable development:

"True development cannot be achieved without the active participation and consultation of persons with disabilities. Our discussions today are instrumental in shaping a more equitable Zambia where everyone can contribute on an equal basis with others," she said. Through focus group discussions, participants tackled critical themes such as employment, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation. The dynamic exchange revealed innovative strategies to break down systemic barriers and promote meaningful inclusion.

Participant Voices

Participants shared impactful testimonials and practical recommendations:

Susan Phiri, a 23-year-old Branch Coordinator for the Albinism Foundation of Zambia and a vocal advocate for albinism rights, applauded the consultative approach:

"This platform has given me a lot of information that I need for my advocacy. I am eager to use the information to help ensure Zambia becomes an inclusive country where no individual with a disability faces discrimination."

As a model, actress, and activist, Phiri emphasized the need to dispel misconceptions:

"Disability is not inability. We can do what any other person can do if only we have an opportunity. Come close to us, learn about us and work with us," she said.

Moses Soko from the Zambia Deaf Society highlighted

the importance of accessible communication systems: "Being included means more than just physical access. It means being heard and valued. True inclusion demands that we empower persons with disabilities to lead and actively participate in decision-making processes."

Ian Banda, Director of Youth in Action Disability Inclusion, pointed to the meeting's timeliness:

"The dialogue comes at a critical moment. Youth with disabilities face challenges in accessing healthcare, employment, and technology. It is time to address these barriers systematically."

Challenges and Opportunities

While Zambia has made strides in disability inclusion, significant gaps persist. Persons with disabilities encounter discrimination, limited access to essential services like healthcare and education, and high unemployment rates. The disparities are more pronounced in rural areas, where infrastructure and resources remain scarce.

UN's Commitment to Lead by Example

The UN Country Team in Zambia is walking the talk on disability inclusion. Following an audit, some UN offices have been retrofitted with ramps to enhance accessibility. Recruitment policies now actively encourage persons with disabilities to apply, with specific agencies setting employment targets. Notably, the Resident Coordinator's Office has a Programme Officer who is deaf, reflecting its commitment to inclusive practices.





PEACE PILLAR



8NDP STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA
Governance and Environment



By 2027, all people, including the marginalized and vulnerable groups, participate in and benefit from sustained peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law, justice, non-discrimination, equality and inclusive and transformative governance

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Strengthened Capacities for Legal Identity, Peace, Justice, and Essential Social Services:



Around 1,071 chiefs, headmen, and traditional councils (291 women, 780 men) were engaged to advocate against child marriage in their respective chiefdoms



A total of 12,177 individuals (6,899 females, 5,278 males) were sensitized on GBV and PSEA.



80,400 men and boys reached with messages on positive masculinity and zero tolerance to violence as a strategy to prevent GBV while 163,000 adolescent girls received information on SRH and GBV in mentorship programmes conducted through safe spaces.

UN work under the Peace Pillar focuses on enhancing national efforts on human rights, inclusive governance, inclusion, safety, gender equality, access to justice and sustaining peace.

In 2024, Zambia took important steps towards ensuring the rights and empowerment of its citizens, particularly in areas such as birth registration, child protection, election participation, gender equality, refugee support, and human rights. These advancements have been directly supported by the UN and other partners.



Strengthened Capacities for Legal Identity, Peace, Justice, and Essential Social Services

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

The UN has made significant strides in strengthening capacities for legal identity, peace, justice, and essential social services. In terms of civil registration and vital statistics, the organization supported the registration and issuance of refugee certificates to 7,596 refugees. Additionally, 430 alien cards were distributed to refugees over 16 years old, enabling the registration of children's births. A total of 367 birth certificates were issued by the Department of National Registration, Passport, and Citizenship (DNRPC) in the refugee database. The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) and UNHCR also conducted sensitization and individual counseling sessions, reaching 364 refugees with information on civil documentation.

Furthermore, 123,998 children under the age of five were registered with DNRPC, marking a 57% increase from 2023, with 27,035 receiving birth certificates. These achievements were particularly significant in six UNICEF-supported districts using the integrated outreach. However, interoperability between civil registration and health systems was achieved in only 86 of the 100 targeted health facilities. The Cabinet approved an amendment to the Births and Deaths Act, and the UN, in collaboration with the Chief Digital Office, finalized the Report on the National Assessment on the Digital Governance Framework for legal identity.

Enhanced Capacities for Public Services

The UN enhanced access to services and protection for forcibly displaced populations in Zambia. In Meheba, a Taxpayer Identification Number (TPIN) registration and tax clinic held in partnership with the Zambian Revenue Authority (ZRA) registered 200 individuals and 33 turnover tax accounts, broadening access to financial services. In Mantapala, 300 persons with disabilities from host communities were assessed through a COR-UNHCR-ZAPD initiative, which facilitated their inclusion in national systems.

In Lusaka, the UN convened two protection panel meetings with five government agencies to strengthen refugee case management. Moreover, the UN supported the National Prosecution Authority in implementing the Inter-Agency Coordination Framework. This effort led to the development of strategies focused on communication, financial investigations into wildlife crime, and asset recovery. Public-private dialogue culminated in recommendations for a forum aimed at combating financial crime.

Information Management Systems

Regarding information management systems, the UN collaborated with the Gender Division and the University of Zambia to finalize data-sharing protocols and the GBV Intake Form for the Zambia National GBV Management Information System (GBV-MIS). Additionally, a directory of 490 GBV prevention and response service providers was mapped and developed in Southern Province. Refresher training was conducted for COR staff on GBV-MIS, and gender desk officers were established in schools and health centers to enhance GBV data collection.

UN support, integrating indicators into the National Education Information Management System (EMIS) to capture sex-disaggregated data on refugee enrollment. This development ensures systematic inclusion of refugees in national education data, supporting evidence-based planning and policy formulation for refugee education.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, the UN facilitated the training of 120 members of Community Welfare Assistance Committees in Kalabo, Mwinilunga, Chipata, and Mpika districts on a community-based case management information system. Developed with the support of USAID ACHIEVE, this system enhances the tracking and management of child protection and social welfare cases at the community level.

Other support by the UN included the drafting of Zambia's Migration Data Strategy through government-led consultations. This strategy defines a vision and objectives for migration data governance, identifies existing gaps, and proposes actionable steps for improving data collection, management, and utilization. Once completed, this strategy will strengthen national capacities for evidence-based migration policies and programming.



Effective Migration Management

The UN actively engaged with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security to advocate for amendments to the Immigration and Deportation Act. These amendments aim to align national laws with Zambia's refugee policy commitments, ensuring a more harmonized and protection-sensitive legal framework.

An inter-agency working group, led by COR and the UN, organized an advocacy visit to the Nchelenge correctional facility, focusing on alternatives to detention, access to legal and justice systems, and integration of GBV and child protection considerations in refugee protection programmes.

Furthermore, the UN and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat hosted a regional engagement in Pretoria, South Africa, bringing together SADC Member States and key stakeholders to address mixed migration challenges. Discussions aimed to assess current mixed movement trends, identify priorities for humane responses, and strengthen coordination for displaced populations. This engagement underscored the importance of regional cooperation in addressing the complexities of forced displacement and migration management.

These efforts significantly strengthened the capacities of institutions and systems at central and decentralized levels to deliver effectively, efficiently, and inclusively on their mandates, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, including in crises.

Enhanced National Capacity for HIV/SRHR/TB Estimates

The UN supported the Lusaka City in developing a costed concept for the HIV/SRHR Fast-Track and Sustainability Action Plan (2024–2028). Preparatory work commenced in Katete and

Monze districts under the 2gether4SRH joint programme to strengthen SRHR and HIV interventions.

Integrated HIV/SRHR Services

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders, the UN has made significant strides in delivering HIV/AIDS and SRHR services across health facilities in refugee settlements and the Makeni Transit Centre in Lusaka now operate functional Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) clinics, providing comprehensive HIV prevention, care, and management services. About 30,630 individuals were reached through sensitization sessions and World AIDS Day commemorations to raise awareness and reduce stigma and discrimination. Moreover, the Multi-Month ARV Dispensing was introduced for virally suppressed patients, reducing hospital visits and ensuring convenience and confidentiality.

Comprehensive Care

Currently, 909 People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) are receiving care through ART clinics in refugee settlements. Services include routine cervical cancer screening and tuberculosis testing. Under Voluntary Counseling and Testing, services were provided to 4,156 individuals, with 4,022 receiving both counseling and testing.

There were free antenatal and postnatal care services, including HIV counseling and early infant diagnosis, benefiting 2,131 refugee women who also supported 397 births with skilled birth attendants.

Approximately 30,196 male condoms were distributed within settlements and urban areas to promote sexual and reproductive health.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services were given to 2,873 individuals, enhancing the well-being of PLWHIV.

Subsequently, the UN supported significant improvements in health and non-health service provision in Eastern Zambia, reaching out to vulnerable populations and enhancing service delivery:

To improve the continuum of care for vulnerable groups, focusing on GBV, SRHR, and migration health, 45 service

providers (27 females, 18 males) were trained; 125 beneficiaries (57 females, 68 males) were provided with sensitization services in Chipata, Katete, and Vubwi on SRHR, GBV, and migration health. About 30 community-based distributors (21 females, 9 males) were also trained and linked to health facilities to improve outreach.

About 5,756 beneficiaries, including migrants, sex workers, and young vulnerable individuals, were reached with comprehensive SRHR-HIV information through 121 change agents. Recognizing the importance of access to commodities, the UN facilitated the mobilization and distribution of 57,540 male condoms across health facilities and information hubs in Chipata, Vubwi, and Katete districts.



Improved Capacity for Gender-Sensitive HIV/SRHR Response Plans

Through adolescent outreach, the UN reached 20,101 adolescents (16,399 girls and 3,702 boys) with information on SRHR, GBV, and HIV, linking them to district-level services. Topics included puberty, gender stereotypes, and human rights.

Additionally, GBV Services were provided to 423 GBV survivors (342 females, 81 males) through one-stop centers supported by the GRZ-UN Joint Programme. The Gender Division hosted a meeting to review studies on gender norms and GBV prevention, fostering coordinated and evidence-based approaches.

Strengthened institutional capacities and enhanced oversight of electoral processes

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) established the Electoral Reform Technical Committee (ERTC) through the support from the UN and in turn, facilitated national consultations on the electoral legislative framework and assisted in the development and launch of a Strategic Plan for the Advisory Committee on Elections Management.

UNDP facilitated a high-level dialogue on women's participation in elections and politics during the inaugural visit to Zambia by the RBA Director and UN Assistant Secretary-General. The event, attended by the Vice President, Speaker of the National Assembly, UN Resident Coordinator, along with female Members of Parliament (MPs) and activists, focused on identifying key barriers to women's political involvement and proposed actionable solutions to enhance their participation.

Enhanced capacity and partnerships to prevent, prosecute TIP and protect victims of trafficking

Conducted data training for SADC Member States on the SADC Trafficking in Persons Data Collection System. Supported the Ministry of Community Development and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons

(TIP) Department in identifying and profiling 50 Ethiopian male potential victims of trafficking. CSOs engaged, capacitated and empowered to protect and advance specific human rights issues, including UPR follow-up.

Enhanced understanding and implementation of human rights mechanisms in Zambia

Organized workshops to increase awareness of the UN Human Rights System and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Engaged participants from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, and over 20 civil society organizations (CSOs) participated in the workshop organized in collaboration with the PANOS Institute.

Additionally, there was a concerted effort to raise awareness on international human rights treaties and the recommendations of various human rights mechanisms. Discussions highlighted several pending legal reforms that had been under consideration by Parliament, including the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act, the Public Gathering Bill, and the Anti-Torture Bill. The UN also provided support towards the submission of outstanding reports to UN treaty bodies, such as CEDAW, which ensures that Zambia remains compliant with international human rights commitments.

In terms of advocacy, both government officials

and CSOs were engaged to deepen their understanding of Zambia's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. This included familiarizing them with the recommendations made during previous UPR cycles and fostering knowledge about Zambia's progress in implementing these recommendations. This also involved discussing the UN Human Rights Architecture and the role of national systems and structures, such as the National Mechanism for Reporting, Implementation, and Follow-up, in monitoring and reporting human rights issues.

Finally, human rights were effectively mainstreamed into the emergency drought response, particularly within the protection sector. Special focus was given to vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, ensuring that they had access to emergency relief services. As a result, these groups were better protected, with their rights guaranteed in the face of the ongoing crisis. This integrated approach not only addressed immediate needs but also ensured that the human rights of vulnerable populations were safeguarded during the emergency response.



Enhanced Capacity For Food Insecure Refugees and Displaced People

Food Assistance

Enhanced capacity to support food-insecure refugees and displaced populations was evident through comprehensive food assistance efforts. The UN reached more than 815,000 individuals across 23 drought-affected districts, providing critical support through a combination of cash-based transfers (75%), food vouchers (15%), and in-kind food transfers (11%). In the last quarter of 2024, the UN further extended monthly cash-based transfers to 9,550 refugees, ensuring their resilience and sustained support during the crisis.

Protection Sector Coordination

In coordinating the protection sector, the UN took on a vital co-lead role within the interagency drought response, partnering with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) to bolster coordination capacity. This partnership, encompassing 15 active members, including UN agencies, government entities, and NGOs, yielded significant achievements through joint planning, field-based monitoring, and improved information management. These advancements facilitated evidence-based advocacy, streamlined protection mainstreaming across various sectors, and enhanced resource mobilization. Such collaborative efforts were integral to the revision of the UN Flash Appeal, which realigned priorities and targets for the extended emergency response spanning January to June 2025.

Within the broader drought response, the UN provided targeted multi-purpose cash assistance to over 3,000 refugee households, simultaneously addressing their immediate needs and reinforcing their resilience. Additionally, in-kind food support was distributed, including provisions at Meheba, where vulnerable children at Safe Haven and GBV survivors at the HIC were recipients. Meanwhile, in Mantapala, the Amani Refugee-Led Organisation facilitated two food demonstrations aimed at improving the nutrition of malnourished and vulnerable populations by introducing low-cost, nutrient-dense feeds.



Child Protection

Progress in tackling violence and discrimination was also notable, especially within child protection initiatives. A Child Protection Social Behavior Change (SBC) Plan was developed, validated, and complemented by an advocacy plan targeting the eradication of child marriage. These efforts, combined with national advocacy campaigns and direct engagements, reached 98,191 adolescents and adults, raising awareness and galvanizing action against violence, abuse, and harmful practices targeting children. Furthermore, 1,071 traditional leaders, including 291 women, were involved in advocating against child marriage in their communities.

UNICEF supported a joint mission conducted by the MCDSS and parliamentarians to evaluate the implementation of the Children's Code Act. In collaboration with the Gender Division, the UN also briefed the House of Chiefs on the development of guidelines for instituting customary by-laws aimed at preventing violence against children. These guidelines are expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2025. Moreover, the Social Welfare Case Management In-Service Training Manual was updated to incorporate insights from the Children's Code Act (2022), enhancing the delivery of services to children requiring care and protection.

Childcare Reform

The UN facilitated the transition of 1,021 children (347 boys and 674 girls) from institutional care to family and community-based care, placing 947 children, including refugees, in kinship and foster care arrangements. Emergency foster care services benefited 91 children. Additionally, 495 children (202 girls and 293 boys) were diverted from formal legal proceedings, while 2,836 children (30 girls and 2,806 boys) received pro-bono legal representation, with protection services extended to 2,945 children in total.

Infrastructure improvements were made with the refurbishment and equipping of nine Children's and Juvenile Courts across Lusaka, Kitwe, and Ndola, ensuring the implementation of child-friendly court procedures.

Policy Advocacy

In policy advocacy, the UN supported the dissemination of a policy brief on ending child marriage, which was highlighted during the National Symposium on Cultural Resetting and Ending Child Marriage. To ensure broad accessibility, the brief is being translated into local languages and disability-inclusive formats.

Finally, the UN collaborated with the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Commission to conduct stakeholder consultations for the development of a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP). These efforts enhanced the capacity of state institutions to domesticate and deliver on human rights commitments, track progress, ensure accountability, provide remedies for violations, and uphold Zambia's regional and international obligations.

Celebrating Women: A Refugee Woman's Inspiring Story

In 2012, Ndaywel, 47, with her husband and seven children, fled from their home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for Zambia.

The family was forced to leave due to the political persecution they faced. Their journey was long, hazardous and involved travel by trains, boats, and buses. Some of the routes they took to Zambia were on foot over difficult terrain.

Despite the poverty and other hardships, they have endured over the last 12 years, Ndaywel believes her ability to survive when she fled her country made her determined to help her family adapt to the conditions of life as a refugee and helped her overcome the challenges she faced and achieve what she has today thanks to the safety she found in Zambia.

Upon arriving in Zambia by boat through Mpulungu Harbour on Lake Tanganyika, Ndaywel and her family continued their journey by road to Lusaka, the capital city. After being granted refugee status by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, they were transferred to Meheba Refugee Settlement in Northwestern Province, where Ndaywel started running a restaurant business and also worked hard to be productive through agricultural activities, growing maize, beans, and groundnuts.

These business ventures enabled this inspirational woman to provide for her family and contribute to the community. Ndaywel's entrepreneurial spirit demonstrates how refugees can contribute to their host communities and become self-reliant.

In 2018, Ndaywel and her family were permitted to move to Lusaka based on medical grounds after her daughter was diagnosed with a disability. In Lusaka, she was selling a wide range of merchandise, including agricultural produce. Suddenly, COVID-19 hit and dramatically altered the visibility of her business in



Lusaka, and the family was again struggling to make ends meet. While her small business is a testament to her resilience and determination to provide for her family, it was not enough to endure the economic shocks faced by everyone.

In 2022, Ndaywel, now a mother of three (with an additional six children from her husband), was identified by UNHCR's livelihoods partner, Caritas Czech Republic, to receive assistance to help her recover and improve her income. She received ZKw5,000 (about US \$200) in cash support and a sewing machine.

Thanks to support from UNHCR, Ndaywel is again able to afford essential household needs like food and clothing, including for one of her daughters who requires special care at home due to a disability that prevents her from attending school.

"Despite facing many challenges, the support I received helped boost my confidence and business," said Ndaywel. She stands out as a member of the Makeni Tailoring Production Centre Co-operative Limited, in Lusaka. This remarkable collective of women offers tailoring services and ready-made products, including shirts, trousers, dresses, and school uniforms. The co-operative sells their products to the public and is making a profit. Ndaywel's story highlights challenges faced by refugees when forced to flee their home countries and seek asylum. It also highlights the importance of recognizing that refugees come with talent, drive and a determination to rebuild their lives.

Investing in strong women like Ndaywel is crucial in helping refugee communities and their hosts build cohesive and thriving communities.



PLANET PILLAR



8NDP STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA
Environmental Sustainability



By 2027, ecosystems are healthier, and all people, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, are more resilient and continue to benefit from the sustainable management and use of natural resources and environmental services, and more effective responses to climate change, shocks and stresses



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



The UN through UNFPA supported two toll-free helplines, Lifeline and Childline, which provided crucial information on drought, healthcare, and referrals for women and girls at risk of gender-based violence (GBV).



About \$2 million was contributed from Japan towards drought response through the World Food Programme, providing food assistance to around 41,882 vulnerable households in Gwembe, Siavonga, and Sinazongwe

The Planet Pillar is concerned with enabling more sustainable management of Zambia's natural resources, mitigating climate change impact and reducing and managing disaster risks.

The UN supported efforts to address climate change and enhance emergency response, including by increasing small-holder farmers climate resilience, national emergency preparedness, improvement of natural resource management and biodiversity protection through community involvement.



Advancing Climate Action and Sustainable Development in Zambia

Renewable Energy and Clean Technology

LO in partnership with KGRTC has been providing capacity building for engineers, technicians and managers in the SADC region enhancing technical capacity to apply, manage and promote the latest Renewable Energy, Energy Efficient and Renewable Energy Integration technologies.

The intervention significantly impacted practices, governance, and policies in the Renewable Energy (RE) and Electricity (EE) sectors by fostering skills development, improving training structures, and driving broader policy discussions. The project transformed practices in the RE and EE sectors by introducing structured, market-driven training programs, such as solar PV courses, which equipped participants with skills to correctly size systems, assess loads, and troubleshoot installations. Grid integration training has also helped utilities adopt best practices for integrating RE systems into existing power grids.

The UN-Italy Partnership has played a pivotal role in advancing renewable energy solutions in Zambia. Through this collaboration, seven private energy projects were funded with a total investment of USD 1.1 million. These initiatives significantly expanded access to clean energy, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and contributed meaningfully to Zambia's progress towards its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In parallel, the UN Climate Promise has supported a project that explores the alignment between renewable energy mini-grids and Productive Uses of Electricity (PUE). As part of this effort, five organizations, including Civil Society Organizations and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), were each awarded USD 20,000, totaling USD 100,000. These grants were awarded to entities that demonstrated strong business cases for promoting community-level PUE—whether through the use or sale of equipment or through capacity building for local adoption of PUE practices.

Scaling Climate Ambition

In collaboration with the Swedish Energy Agency, the UN supported Zambia in generating Internationally Transferable

Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs) under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement. This initiative is a major step toward advancing climate ambition through market-based mechanisms and global partnerships.

Catalyzing Green Investment through PISTA

Zambia was selected to benefit from the Platform for Investment Support and Technical Assistance (PISTA), receiving a USD 305,000 catalytic fund to help energy projects reach bankable stages. Currently, PISTA is supporting:

- *The Cooma Solar Project (65MW) with USD 160,000; and*
- *A Nature-Based Solutions Project with USD 145,000.*

These efforts are designed to attract additional climate financing and accelerate Zambia's transition toward a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy.

Promoting Climate-Resilient Agriculture

Over 2,000 smallholder farmers in Namwala, Gwembe, Monze, and Pemba districts received support through the SCRALA project, enabling them to adapt to climate change, enhance productivity, and increase household incomes. Moreover, four commercial boreholes equipped with water-efficient technologies were established in Monze and Chipangali districts. These installations have enabled 300 smallholders to undertake year-round crop production, improving both food security and incomes. Additionally, seed banks were set up to support 1,200 farmers and refugees in Mantapala, with a focus on legumes such as groundnuts and beans. These banks provided access to high-quality seeds, enhanced crop diversity, and strengthened community food systems and livelihoods.

Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation

The Lubofu Community Forest Management Group (CFMG), supported by the UN Seoul Policy Centre, is managing 6,219 hectares of forest in Kasempa. This initiative promotes biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest use, and livelihood support for

local communities. Similarly, the Kazungula Community Forest Management Group secured approval for 9,800 hectares of forest land in Sekute Chiefdom, empowering local communities to sustainably manage natural resources while promoting environmental protection and economic opportunities.

Strengthening Climate Governance: NDC 3.0 Revision

Zambia successfully launched the revision process for its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0, including a comprehensive stocktake. This initiative is aimed at enhancing climate ambition, reducing emissions, and aligning national development with long-term sustainability.

Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Climate Resilience

A national contingency plan was developed following a thorough Vulnerability Assessment conducted across 94 districts (84 affected by drought and 10 by floods). This plan includes the prepositioning of food and non-food items in vulnerable areas to strengthen household food security and disaster response.

At the community level, three Satellite Disaster Management Committees were established in Gwembe District, while District Disaster Management Officers (DDMOs) in Chipata received specialized training. These efforts are enhancing local-level resilience, disaster preparedness, and environmental risk management, reinforcing Zambia's ability to respond effectively to climate-related shocks.



Climate Change and Drought Response



Drought Response and Food Security

Japan generously contributed approximately USD 2 million through the World Food Programme (WFP) to support Zambia's drought response. This funding enabled the provision of food assistance to around 41,882 vulnerable households in Gwembe, Siavonga, and Sinazongwe districts. These interventions provided much-needed relief to communities facing food insecurity, reinforcing Zambia's efforts toward social protection and sustainable development.

Toll-Free Helplines for Crisis Support

To address the growing risks faced by women and girls during climate crises, the UN, through UNFPA, supported two toll-free helplines – Lifeline and Childline. These platforms provided critical information on drought conditions, healthcare, and referrals for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors. The helplines received a total of 417,184 calls, with 83,437 calls specifically linked to drought and GBV. This initiative significantly improved access to life-saving information and services, particularly for women and girls, enhancing their safety, well-being, and empowerment during emergencies.

Education and Capacity Building for Climate Resilience

As part of long-term efforts to integrate climate action into education, the UN supported the finalization of the National Curriculum Framework in partnership with

the Ministry of Education. Key achievements include:

- Development of behavioral science principles to guide the integration of climate change topics in textbooks, lesson planning, and teacher training.
- Creation of curriculum outlines for master's and PhD programmes in Climate Change and Sustainability Education, in collaboration with the University of Zambia (UNZA).

These efforts are building a foundation for climate literacy and environmental stewardship among learners and educators alike.

Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Smart Agriculture

In Chibombo district, 250 hectares of land were secured for sustainable land management. Five demonstration plots were established for agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and reforestation. Furthermore, the Capacity Building for Women and Youths in Climate Resilience Agriculture and Agroforestry Project trained 146 participants (including 85 females, 96 youth, and 8 persons with disabilities) in apiculture. As a result:

- 180 beehives were constructed;
- 400 trees and cassava cuttings were planted;

These efforts strengthened local livelihoods, diversified income sources, and promoted nature-based solutions.

Community-Based Climate Adaptation Initiatives

Under the Enhancing Inclusive Rural Community Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change Project, 74 households received training in agroforestry and cultivation of fruit and nutritious tree species. Notably, women comprised 49% and youths 36% of the participants, demonstrating strong gender and generational inclusion in climate adaptation efforts. Water Resources Management in the Lower Zambezi Basin. The Enhancing Climate-Smart Water Resources Management Project trained 30 students and orphans on environmental stewardship, focusing on tree planting and maintenance. A one-hectare forest was established, contributing to reforestation and supporting a school nutrition programme, a clear example of linking environmental action with social outcomes.

Community Forestry and Climate Finance

More than 10,000 hectares of land were secured for community forestry, with 20 Forest and Farm Producer Organization (FFPO) proposals approved for small grants. These grants promote:

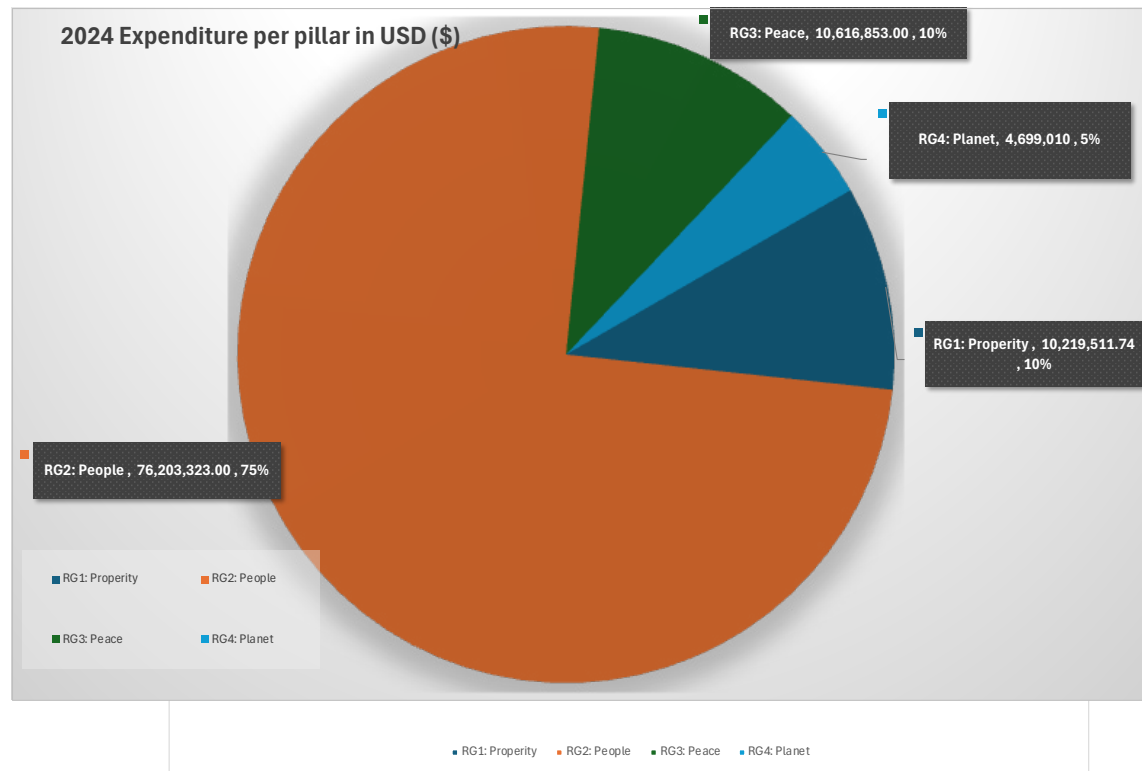
- Sustainable land use;
- Agroforestry;
- Carbon schemes through nature-based solutions;
- Assessed existing training materials;
- Supported the Chiefs' Conference on AFR100;
- Assisted the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) in developing a concept note under GEF-8, aligning local forestry action with international climate finance frameworks.

Innovating Climate Information Services

To ensure communities and farmers are better protected from climate shocks, the UN facilitated engagements with insurance companies to integrate Climate Information Services (CIS) into the design of innovative insurance products. These efforts aim to increase financial resilience, reduce risk, and support inclusive adaptation strategies.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The UN in Zambia invested a total of \$101,738, 698 in 2024 to support Zambia's development priorities core areas under Prosperity, People, Peace, Planet and Partnerships which cuts across.



From Dust to Plenty: Conservation Agriculture and Its Impact



From Dust to Plenty: Conservation Agriculture and Its Impact
Brilliant Chivunga, a smallholder farmer in Namwala District, Zambia, is a beneficiary of the SCRALA project (Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II). This project aims to improve climate resilience for smallholder farmers across Zambia, addressing challenges such as drought and food insecurity.

Namwala District faces harsh climate conditions, characterized by dry soil, withered vegetation, and prolonged droughts that have severely impacted agricultural productivity. Chivunga, like many farmers in the region, experienced repeated crop failures due to climate-related issues, including droughts and floods. In recent years, Zambia has faced widespread crop failure, with a prolonged drought destroying over 980,000 hectares of maize out of the 2.2 million hectares planted nationally.

As part of the SCRALA project, Chivunga received training in Conservation Agriculture. These techniques emphasize soil moisture preservation, erosion prevention, and nutrient retention, resulting in improved crop yields even in adverse weather conditions. Starting with plant basins on one hectare of her farmland, Chivunga quickly achieved better harvests compared to traditional farming methods. She later adopted ripping practices using project-provided tools, such as a ripper, sprayer, and herbicides. The use of rip lines has helped her effectively apply fertilizer and lime to neutralize soil acidity, fostering deeper-rooted maize plants that are resistant to drought.

During the 2023/2024 farming season, Chivunga harvested 75 bags of maize weighing 50 kilograms each from one hectare of land, surpassing the national average yield. Her maize provides food security for her household and income through sales at K600 (USD 23) per 50kg bag. She also grows additional crops such as groundnuts and cowpeas. With surplus maize production, she has supported extended family members affected by drought.

Chivunga also trains 14 follower farmers in Conservation Agriculture, helping them adopt these practices to improve their harvests. As a lead farmer, she empowers other women in her community by sharing these techniques. From her personal field, she harvested 30 bags of maize from one lima.

The SCRALA project, financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and co-financed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and UNDP, with technical support from organizations such as WFP, FAO, ZMD, and WARMA, facilitates the dissemination of conservation farming methods. Routine training sessions, community radio programs, and farmer field schools reach farmers across 16 targeted districts. So far, 129,414 farmers—48% women—have been trained. The initiative also provides essential climate and weather information to aid farmers in making informed decisions about planting and marketing strategies, promoting resilience and sustainable agricultural productivity.



Gender Equality

Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) remain integral to realizing the 2030 Agenda and all of the SDGs. The UN system in Zambia's integrated focus on GEWE is evidenced throughout the Cooperation Framework, with gender equality at the heart of programming driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men. This work is measured annually by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in the UNCT System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard .

Table 2.6: Overview of the UNCT-SWAP Cumulative Results in 2024.



The table above indicates ratings scored by the UNCT in Zambia for each Performance Indicator across the seven dimensions of analysis. In 2024, the UNCT as indicated exceeded minimum requirements in some of the following areas: Common Country Analysis; UNSDCF Indicators and Monitoring and Evaluation ; Joint Programmes; Engagement with GEWE CSOs and Gender Coordination Mechanism Of particular note under this achievement, the UN Zambia Joint Programmes (JPs) visibly mainstreamed GEWE into at least 50 percent of JPs operational at the time of assessment. Key among these included:

- Global Programme on Ending Child Marriage
 - Joint Programme on Social Protection
 - Gender Equality and Women's Participation Initiative
 - Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Programme (2024-2027)
- Together for SRHR

- Promoting Disability Inclusion in HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Social Protection in Luapula Province
- Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS

UN Zambia has developed internal guidelines for Joint Programmes (JPs) based on existing agency expertise to ensure the achievement of GEWE results, which must aim to achieve a Gender Equality Marker of 3 (GEM 3) . This work is further consolidated by a robust internal coordination mechanism for gender equality, the UN- Gender Theme Group, chaired by a Head of Agency and actively participating in the CCA, UNSDCF and Annual Joint Work planning and Reporting (M&E).

Currently, the UN in Zambia also Chairs the Cooperating Partners Group on Gender, which group comprises several cooperating partners (including The World Bank, Embassy of Ireland, Embassy of Sweden, USAID etc) supporting the Government of Zambia's GEWE programming.

Key GEWE Joint Achievements

Approval of the National Gender Policy (2023)

The UN provided both technical and financial support to the Gender Division towards review, launch and dissemination of the National Gender Policy and its Implementation Plan, approved by Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) in December 2023. The National Gender Policy is the national framework for addressing gender inequalities and commitment towards improving the status of women and girls in Zambia. This work was complimented by orientation of thirty (30) Gender Officers from the 10 Provinces of Zambia to strengthen capacity for effective implementation of the Policy and enhanced Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Report submission

Zambia submitted a combined 7th, 8th and 9th State Party Report on the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations in February 2025, following dedicated support of the UN system in Zambia working with the Gender Division. All States parties submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights of women are being implemented. This achievement entailed Zambia is

now up to date with meeting outstanding commitment to the CEDAW Committee.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) on Women, Peace & Security – National Action Plan

Through a focused and collaborative process coordinated by the Gender Division, the United Nations collaborated with a dedicated Technical Working Group (TWG) of government and civil society representatives to conceptualise and draft Zambia's first National Action Plan towards implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in December 2024. Zambia joins the 101 UN Member States implementing national action plans focused on addressing the significant gap in women's participation in all levels of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction, including combating gender-based violence.

These two processes were significant for our work in Zambia as both UNSCR 1325 and the CEDAW together can be instrumental to broaden, strengthen and operationalize gender equality in the context of conflict, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and enhancing full participation of women in decision-making at national, regional and international levels as a critical component in the achievement of gender equality.

Marriages (Amendment) Act No.13 of 2023

Zambia is home to nearly 2 million child brides, with 3 in 10 young women married in childhood . As part of interventions under the Global Programme on Ending Child Marriages in Zambia, the UN System supported the landmark amendment to the Marriages Act Chapter 50 of the Laws of Zambia to set 18 years as the minimum legal age of marriage for both customary and statutory marriages in Zambia. This work was further complimented by a Policy Brief on implications and considerations for accelerating progress in the context of Zambia's Marriage.

In augmenting UN Zambia support to curbing child marriages, the UN is leveraging support to the Office of the First Lady through the annual Ending Child Marriage in Zambia Conference aimed at fostering a safer and more empowered environment for young girls. The UN Zambia system is further supporting finalisation of the Ending Child Marriage Strategy to strengthen protections for girls.

Support to Zambia's Gender Machinery



The UN led by the Resident Coordinator Ms. Beatrice Mutali joined Cooperating Partners and the Women's Movement in a historic inaugural meeting with the President Mr Hakainde Hichilema towards enhanced coordinated operations of the gender machinery in Zambia. Several key issues were discussed aimed among others at enhancing women's meaningful participation and curbing rampant gender-based violence in Zambia. Issues included, a decentralised gender-based crime department, increased allocation to the National Prosecution Authority Witness Management Fund, review of the Criminal Procedure Code, setting up of additional Courtrooms, scaling up on numbers of social workers, operationalising the GBV Fund and increasing shelters and safe homes for victims of GBV including enhanced private sector engagement and commitment towards addressing GBV. The Republican President committed to quarterly meetings with the gender machinery towards enhancing the situation of women and girls in Zambia

African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Zambia Chapter Launch

In September 2024, the UN Zambia Resident Coordinator Ms. Beatrice Mutali and the Republican Vice President Mrs W.K Nalumango officially launched

the African Women's Leaders Network (ALWN) Zambia Chapter. The inaugural AWLN conference under the theme "Women Connect, Unite and Lead" attracted over 400 delegates from different sectors across the country.

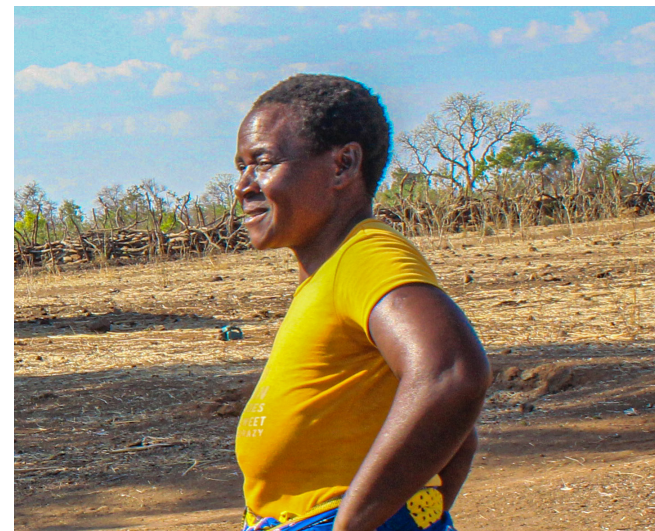
The African Women Leaders Network, supported by the African Union and the United Nations is a ground-breaking movement of African women leaders aimed at enhancing the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa, in line with Africa Agenda 2063 for 'the Africa we want', and the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – PSEA

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse remains a high priority for UN Zambia. The UN Zambia Resident Coordinator continuously encourages all UN staff and implementing partners undertake the United Nations standards of conduct on the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse orientation training and promotion of a work culture and environment that fosters Zero Tolerance to Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. This work is anchored on the UN Zambia PSEA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) approved by the UNCT in September 2023.

Within the context of the ongoing emergency context with the drought and cholera outbreak, the UN Zambia supported safeguarding of vulnerable populations from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) at the points of service provision and beyond. This was done through provision of PSEAH awareness and sensitization sessions during food and cash distribution. Care givers in the cholera response were also supported with capacitation and awareness raising. This work was further consolidated through collaboration of UN Agencies, Implementing Partners and Government Line Ministries and Departments, International and National NGOs, Institutions of Learning and Civil Society towards amplified inter-agency coordination and accountability in preventing SEA during emergency responses and

ensuring the protection of vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse.



Disability Inclusion

The UN in Zambia continues to recognize the importance of mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities into its developmental processes, from programme design and implementation to promoting, protecting, and providing technical capacity development for marginalized populations, especially persons with disabilities.

Consultations with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) were conducted between Heads of Agencies and OPDs to ensure the effective implementation of the UN Disability Strategy (UNDIS). These consultations informed and guided the rollout of the strategy, ensuring it was inclusive of diverse perspectives and needs. Furthermore, OPDs were also consulted during preparations for the Summit for the Future. Additionally, on accessibility, the UNSDCF was translated into accessible formats and all local Zambian languages, enabling a broader audience, including persons with disabilities, to engage with and benefit from this essential document.6. Gender (score card)

Organized a town hall meeting attended by over 322 staff members, where training on the Disability Inclusion Strategy was provided. The meeting highlighted the importance of accessibility and inclusive practices within the UN system. It was attended by Heads of Agencies and chaired by the RC.

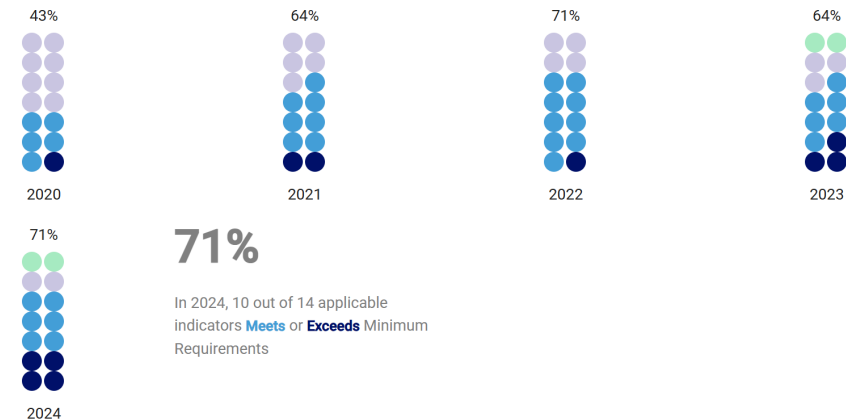
Over the years, the UN in Zambia has made advances in its performance on the disability scorecard with regard to disability inclusion through core areas of Leadership, Strategic Planning and Management; Inclusiveness; Programming and Organisational Culture. In 2024, 10 out of 14 applicable indicators ‘meet’ or ‘exceed’ minimum requirements.

Disability Scorecard Results

Zambia: Progress on Disability Inclusion Scorecard % of indicators by status

Exceeds Meets Approaches Missing N/A

Not applicable ratings have been excluded.



Communications and Advocacy

Through targeted advocacy and communication efforts, the UN in Zambia strengthened public engagement and increased awareness on critical issues in line with UN support to Zambia and normative issues including gender, human rights and disability. The UN in Zambia worked through the inter-agency United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) to promote key messages on various issues of interest in line with sustainable development.

Celebrity Partnerships

In leveraging the power of celebrity endorsements, the UN in Zambia worked with celebrated female soccer player and UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador for the Education Plus Initiative, Racheal Kundananji, in disseminating media messages and holding school-based in person engagements on the need to reduce new HIV infections, fighting GBV and teenage pregnancies among young people. Additionally, worked with renowned musician Brian Bwembya B'Flow to create a song on the importance of ending child marriage and ensuring girls and boys access formal education.

Awareness on Drought and Disease Crises

In response to a devastating drought that affected over six million people in 84 districts, the UN supported the government-led response in crisis communications and community engagement (RCCE) through the production and dissemination of communication materials to enhance public awareness and response to drought and disease challenges such as cholera.

The various print and audio-visual materials helped the public in the affected areas to access crucial information on available support such as food assistance, resilient farming methods and livelihood practices.

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN coordinated mass media, social media, and youth engagement initiatives through youth



organizations in tertiary education institutions to drive awareness and action on SDGs in campuses and surrounding communities. Over 2,000 students were engaged through in-person and virtual outreach, inspiring concrete actions towards achieving the SDGs.

In partnership with the Government of Zambia, the UN successfully organized a key advocacy event dubbed 'Run/Walk for the SDGs' and engaged 2,800 participants and raising awareness on key SDGs, particularly SDG 3 and 16 on Good Health and Well-being and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

To promote a better media reporting on disability inclusion, the UN worked with Organizations for Persons with Disabilities to organize two national media training programmes for reporters and editors, leading to improved media coverage in key media outlets including increasing use of correct terminologies in stories.

Further, participants created a community of practice through which they continued to share best practices in treatment of stories on disability.

Promoting Social Cohesion and Combating Misinformation

Amid heated debate on imminent enactment of Cyber Security Bill and Cybercrimes laws in Zambia, the UN in Zambia organized a media dialogue on combatting hate speech and disinformation, reinforcing the UNCT Action Plan on the Prevention of Genocide and supporting the newly established Zambian National Committee on the Prevention of Genocide.

Enhancing UN Visibility and Public Engagement

The UN coordinated One UN visibility at major public events and helped to position the organization as a unified partner working jointly to support Zambia's development and humanitarian efforts.

Further, the UN expanded social media reach, increasing followers and engagement on UN Zambia platforms by 40% through consistent and strategic digital communication efforts.

Standing up for Human Rights

In efforts to raise awareness about human rights and the importance of public understanding the fundamental principles that protect their dignity, freedom, and equality, the UN in Zambia partnered with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Zambian Human Rights Commission and ActionAid in holding impactful community outreach events. The events drew the participation of the Embassy of Sweden, traditional leaders, women and youth groups, reflecting the broad support for human rights across different sectors of society and buttressed need for unwavering dedication to building a future where human rights are respected and upheld for all.

Child Rights Protection

Other advocacy efforts included sharing key messages to create awareness on the Children's Code Act, No. 12 of 2022, a Zambian law, that aims to protect children's rights and welfare, encompassing areas such as parental responsibility, custody, and child protection, while also addressing children in conflict with the law.

Partnerships and Financing for SDGs

The UN in Zambia continued to nurture partnerships for acceleration of the SDGs with the Government, Cooperating Partners, Financial Institutions, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia, Philanthropy, Media, Trade Unions, and humanitarian actors among others.

To enhance the partnership, the UNCT and the Government of the Republic of Zambia, convened two Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meetings in 2024, to provide strategic guidance and oversight towards the implementation of the Cooperation Framework 2023-2027. The JSC meetings provided an opportunity for the UN and Government to hold strategic dialogues on priority development, humanitarian and peace building issues. Both sides presented progress updates towards the implementation of the 8NDP and Cooperation Framework. The GRZ-UN Joint Steering Committee is co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, and the UN Resident Coordinator.

The UN continues to be a trusted partner for the Government of the Republic of Zambia. The government values the partnership with the UN which is evidenced by the government's request for UN's active participation in the National Development Coordinating Committee meetings, the highest development national coordination forum. As a result of the strong partnership between the UN and the government, the UN is allowed to present on its achievements and contributions towards advancing national development priorities and SDGs in the National Development Coordinating Committee meetings. The UN supported the government to develop user friendly reporting templates for Cluster Advisory Groups for highlighting achievement during the National Development Coordinating Committee meetings.

The UN is a key member of the Cooperating Partners Group and continued to participate in the meetings and other strategic engagements with Cooperating Partner Group members. UN's membership and active participation in the Cooperating Partners Group enhances its work with other Cooperating Partners and Government as well as in advancing advocate on decisions meant to accelerate the



achievement of SDGs.

Major focus on these meetings in 2024 was on the collaborative efforts to support the government, addressing more on the drought and cholera crisis which negatively affected the government. Joint clusters were established to review the impact of the crisis which resulted in joint resources mobilisation. Furthermore, the partnership is critical in developing joint programmes to support the government, such as social cash transfers, gender and women empowerment, among others.

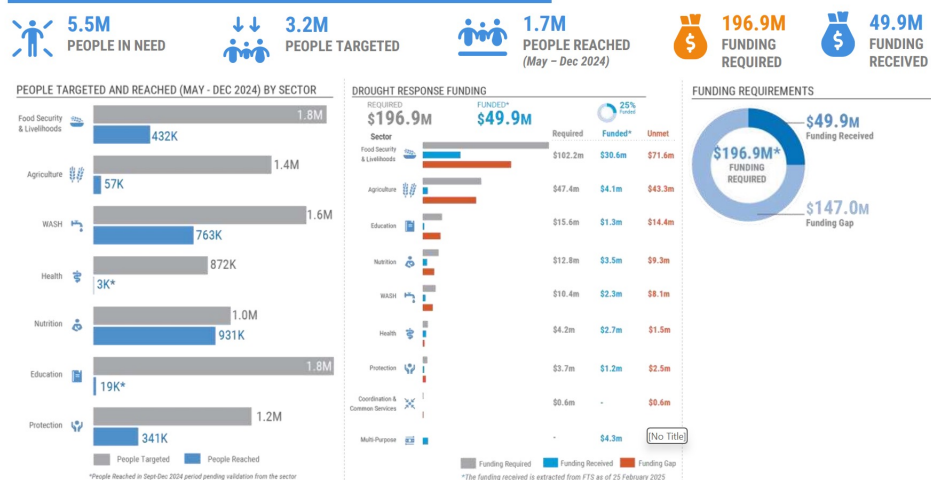
Strategic partnership with the European Union (EU), as a multilateral organization with shared values, continues to grow stronger. The UN held a strategic dialogue with the EU to further reinforce and strengthen the partnership that goes beyond specific programmes or projects, or mere information sharing but focusing on strategic partnerships that could look more at other levels of cooperation. During the strategic dialogue, the two sides resolved to collaborate more at country level and exploit untapped potential to enhance the partnership on various policy issues. It was further observed that the dialogue was an opportunity for more collaboration in various

development strategies to enhance structured engagement on policy and programmatic levels. Similarly, the UN should view the EU as a policy partner at country level committed to multilateralism and not only as a donor.



HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN ZAMBIA

Drought Response: People Reached & Funding



Coordination and Funding:

OCHA Support: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) facilitated Humanitarian Country Team meetings, inter-sector coordination, monitoring responses using the 5Ws matrix, financial tracking of the drought appeal, and managing the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for Zambia.

CERF Allocation: \$5.5 million was allocated to four UN agencies—WFP, FAO, UNICEF, and UNHCR—to address needs in Food Security, WASH, Nutrition, and Protection, reaching 560,000 people, including 50,000 refugees.

Drought Response and Food Security:

Severe Agricultural Season: The 2023/2024 farming period was the driest in over four decades, resulting in severe crop losses, widespread livestock deaths, and a significant rise in poverty levels. Over nine million people across 84 of Zambia's 117 districts were severely impacted by the drought.

Food Insecurity: The lingering effects of El Niño extended into the 2024/2025 season, with an estimated 5.83 million people projected to face severe food insecurity (IPC3+) between October 2024 and March 2025, including nearly 236,000 in emergency conditions (IPC4).

UN and Government Response:

National Disaster Declaration: In February 2024, the President of Zambia declared the drought a national disaster.

\$228 Million Appeal: The UN and its partners launched a \$228 million appeal to assist 4.6 million people between May and December 2024, complementing the government's efforts led by the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU).

Cluster Activation: Multiple clusters were activated to implement the Government-led Food Security Drought Response Plan, co-led with the UN System, including Agriculture and Food Security, Nutrition, WASH, Health, Education, Protection, Early Recovery & Resilience, RCCE, Energy, Emergency Logistics, Infrastructure, and Wildlife Management.



BUSINESS OPERATIONS STRATEGY (BOS)

In 2024, the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) served as a central repository for cost avoidance data on UNINFO, supporting the annual review, implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes. It provided a structured framework for continuous knowledge sharing, accessibility, and accountability, enhancing operational efficiency across UN agencies.

In 2024, the OMT successfully completed key activities, refocused on core responsibilities, and enhanced the implementation of program activities. This progress was driven by the direct impact of OMT recommendations to the UNCT, facilitating the UNSDCF through the BOS, which created an enabling environment for effective delivery.

The total realized benefits for 2024 amounted to \$414,103, with contributions from the following areas: ICT Services (\$144,976), Administration (\$253,923), Procurement (\$11,420), and Finance (\$3,784). This represents an increase of \$205,575 compared to the benefits in 2023. Administration saw a particularly notable increase of \$218,325, driven by energy savings from the solar installation at the UN House in Zambia and the establishment of a long-term vehicle rental agreement.

ICT services realized an increase of \$16,615, benefiting from economies of scale in internet services provision. Procurement also experienced an increase of \$8,284, resulting from improvements in vendor and contract management processes. This year, procurement expanded the number of LTAs, making contract management more efficient.

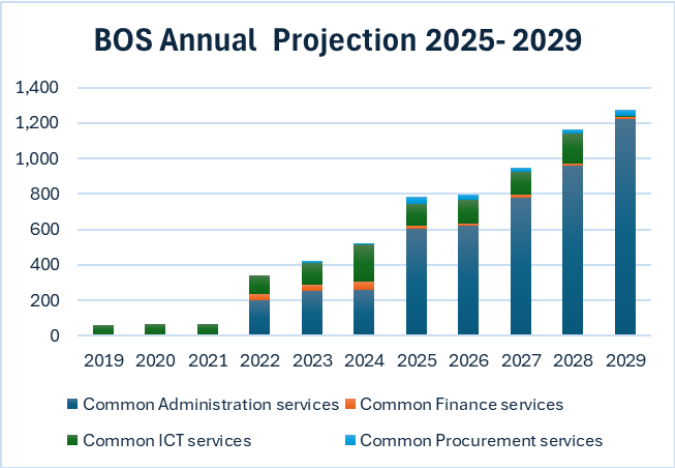
However, Finance recorded a decrease of \$37,649, primarily due to non-fee transactional costs

associated with bulk payments and cash transfers. The observed service costs during the year were largely attributed to labor for internal processes.

Through its efficiency agenda, the OMT in Zambia has fostered effective collaboration among UN entities, advancing the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

As the BOS continues to focus on improving effectiveness, accountability, and cohesion, it has progressively generated benefits. These cost savings are expected to grow over the next five years (2025–2029), further supporting the UNSDCF, SDGs, and program implementation.

Opportunities for innovation and the implementation of best practices have been pivotal across agencies, fostering a platform for effective collaboration. The strengthened synergy among UN agencies in Zambia drives the Vision 2030 Agenda through: (i) the Memorandum of Understanding for common services, (ii) the implementation of the BOS Annual Work Plan, (iii) ongoing contributions from the five key OMT Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in planning and executing the efficiency agenda, and (iv) strategic guidance provided by the UNCT.



BOS CUMMULATIVE COST AVOIDANCE (2019 – 2024)

Service Lines	Estimated Cost Avoidance	Realized Cost Avoidance	Cost Avoidance Ratio
Administration	\$733	\$307	41.90
Finance	\$114	\$66	58.04
Information Tech	\$609	\$273	44.85
Procurement	\$24	\$15	61.64
Human Resource	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,480	\$661	44.47

Cost Avoidance Impact by Service 2019 – 2024

However, the primary challenges in implementing the Efficiency Agenda are: (i) enhancing the accountability of UN agencies through active participation and (ii) establishing a robust Cost-Benefit Analysis framework to accurately capture cost avoidance. These challenges are being addressed through the ongoing support of the OMT Chair and oversight by the UNCT.

Key service categories expected to generate significant cost avoidance include:

Solar installation at the UN House and replication to the UN house, there is an anticipation of reduction in electricity and generator fuel, a net metering grid feed cost efficiency charge. This realization is expected to last the full length of the investment of 15 to 20 years. Accommodation and conferencing facilities, pending the establishment of a Long-Term Agreement (LTA).

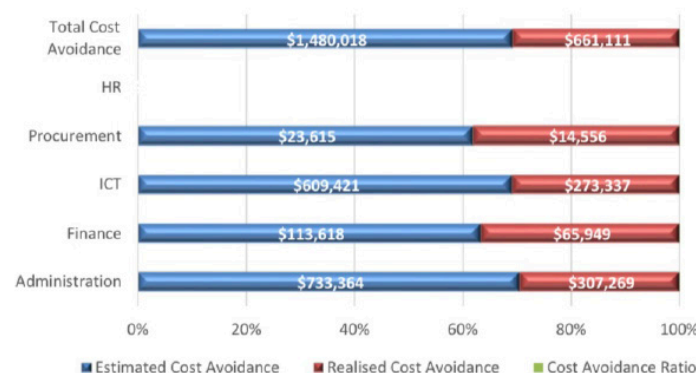
ICT network services, contributing to operational efficiencies. Minor cost avoidance is anticipated from the Finance HACT Audit, with the 2023 audits completed in 2024.

Additionally, vehicle rental remains a crucial cost-saving area. However, these savings may be moderated by the implementation of the UN Mobility platform once it becomes accessible across agencies and includes provisions for field trips.

Other services that have generated returns, previously nonexistent before the BOS, include:

- Air travel
- Security services

BOS Zambia Cumulative Cost Avoidance 2019 - 2024



LOOKING FORWARD

In 2025, the UN in Zambia will build on the momentum gained over the past year, expanding on successful initiatives and deepening its impact through strategic, integrated programming. Joint programme funding—both ongoing and newly secured—will play a vital role in scaling up interventions that are catalytic, sustainable, and capable of attracting additional resources. In light of a constrained global funding environment, the UN will strengthen its collaborative approach, ensuring that agencies with complementary mandates come together to design and deliver cohesive programmes. This way, each agency's unique expertise can be harnessed more effectively to deliver greater benefits for communities and the nation at large. For instance, in food systems, multiple agencies will coordinate more closely on integrated approaches to increase reach, relevance, and results.

In the area of economic transformation, the UN will support Zambia's progress through frameworks such as the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), a 10-year global initiative helping Least Developed Countries address structural vulnerabilities and accelerate sustainable development. A key milestone will be the co-hosting of the LDC Future Forum by the Government of Zambia, the Government of Finland, and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS).

Agriculture will remain a central focus, given its critical role in economic recovery and inclusive growth. Efforts will include integrated support for food security, livelihoods, and nutrition-sensitive programming. The UN will help expand irrigation infrastructure, especially solar-powered boreholes, and promote the use of drought-resistant seeds, crop diversification, and stronger market linkages. Investments in value chains and scaling up of proven

models will help boost productivity and resilience. In tandem, there will be targeted support for skills development in the critical minerals sector and technical assistance to ensure that essential services are incorporated into the planning and implementation of the Lobito Corridor, a regional infrastructure project aimed at improving trade and connectivity between Zambia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Efforts to strengthen human development will be sustained, with emphasis on health, education, and social protection. In the health sector, the UN will support Zambia in expanding universal health coverage, increasing domestic financing for HIV programmes, and securing consistent access to essential commodities. There will also be a renewed focus on eliminating tuberculosis, hepatitis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases.

Informed by recent public health challenges, the UN will help enhance preparedness and response systems to better manage future emergencies. Promoting gender equality will remain a priority. The UN will roll out the Spotlight Initiative, an ambitious intervention designed to end violence against women and girls. This approach will address systemic drivers through reforms in laws and institutions, preventative measures, improved response services, and support to women's movements and leadership. Implementation will be led by the Gender Division, in close collaboration with government institutions such as the judiciary, police, and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), along with civil society and traditional authorities.

In the environmental sector, the UN will support the expansion of inclusive and viable clean energy solutions. By leveraging catalytic funding from the Joint SDG Programme on Just Energy Transition, efforts will focus on improving the availability and affordability of clean energy in both rural and urban areas. Priority will be placed on closing capacity gaps among energy-sector micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

through access to blended finance, practical business development support, and tailored coaching. This work will complement national efforts to develop updated climate pledges (NDCs), contributing to Zambia's ambitions for affordable and clean energy under the global SDG agenda. Looking ahead to Zambia's national elections in 2026, the UN's governance-related work in 2025 will emphasize support for the implementation of recommendations from the 2023 Needs Assessment Mission. The next phase of the Democracy Strengthening in Zambia Project will further enhance electoral processes, while a new national peace architecture initiative will help establish long-term frameworks for peace and conflict prevention. Human rights protection will continue to be a cross-cutting priority.

Operationally, the UN will maintain a strong focus on improving coherence and cost-efficiency through the continued implementation of the UN Country Team's Business Operations Strategy (BOS). These efforts will help to reduce duplication, maximize resources, and further align the UN's internal systems to deliver more impactful and sustainable results for the people in Zambia.



Acronyms

2gether4SRH - Joint Programme for Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health
8NDP - 8th National Development Plan
AFR100 - African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
APM - Area Pump Minders
ART - Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV - Antiretroviral Medication
ASM - Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
AWD - Acute Watery Diarrhea
BOS - Business Operations Strategy
CAB-LA - Long-Acting Injectable Cabotegravir
CBID - Community-Based Inclusive Development
CBVs - Community-Based Volunteers
CCA: Country Common Analysis
CDF - Constituency Development Fund
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFM - Community Forest Management
CLAC - Climate Landscape Analysis for Children
COR - Office of the Commissioner for Refugees
CRM: Critical Raw Materials
CSOs - Civil Society Organizations
DaO: Delivering as One
DMMU - Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
DNPRC - Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship
DPoA - Doha Programme of Action
DPT-1 to DPT-3 - Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus Vaccination Series
DRM - Disaster Risk Management
DWASHE - District Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Education
ECA - Economic Commission for Africa
ECAT - Early Childhood Assessment Tool
ECE - Early Childhood Education
ECZ - Electoral Commission of Zambia
EHT - Environmental Health Technologists
eLMIS - Electronic Logistics Management Information System
EMIS - Education Management Information System
ERTC - Electoral Reform Technical Committee
EU - European Union
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization
FFF - Forest Facility
FFPO - Forest Producer Organizations

FIT - Facility Improvement Tool
GBV - Gender-Based Violence
GBV-MIS - Gender-Based Violence Management Information System
GCF - Green Climate Fund
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GEF - Global Environment Facility
GEWE - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GEWE CSOs - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Civil Society Organizations
GGS: National Green Growth Strategy
GLAAS - Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water
GPEDC - Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GRZ - Government of the Republic of Zambia
GTG - Gender Theme Group
HACT - Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIC - Health Information Centre
HIV&AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
iCCM - Integrated Community Case Management
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
IDPs - Integrated Development Plans
IEC - Information, Education, and Communication
IFA - Internal Financial Audits
IMF: International Monetary Fund
INFF - Integrated National Financing Framework
IOM - International Organization for Migration
IPC - Integrated Phase Classification
IPV - Inactivated Polio Vaccine
ITMOs - Internationally Tradeable Mitigation Outcomes
IVAG - Internship, Volunteer, Apprenticeship, and Graduate Programme
IYCF-E - Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies
JSC - Joint Steering Committee
LCMS - Living Conditions Monitoring Survey
LDCs - Least Developed Countries
LSHE - Life Skills and Health Education
LTA - Long-Term Agreement
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
MAM - Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MCDSS - Ministry of Community Development and Social Services
MIYCN - Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition
MoFNP - Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MPs - Members of Parliament
MPs - Members of Parliament
MPs - Members of Parliament

MR - Measles and Rubella
MW - Megawatts
NAP - National Action Plan
NDC: Nationally Determined Contributions
NDP: National Development Plan
nOPV2 - Novel Oral Polio Vaccine 2
O3 Programme - Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future Programme
OBB - Output Based Budgeting
OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human
ODA Official Development Assistance
OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRLLS - Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked
Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
OMT - Operations Management Team
OPDs - Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
ORS - Oral Rehydration Solution
PAC - Policy Analysis Committee
PANOS - PANOS Institute of Southern Africa
PISTA - Platform for Investment Support and Technical Assistance
PLWHIV - People Living with HIV
PMTCT - Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (of HIV)
PPP - Public-Private Partnerships
PrEP - Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
PSDFD - Private Sector Development and Finance Division
PSEA - Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PUE - Productive Uses of Electricity
QAPI - Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement
QELER - Quality Early Learning Education Resources
RAPHIZ - Reducing Adolescent Pregnancies and New HIV Infections in Zambia
RBA - Regional Bureau for Africa
RC - Resident Coordinator
RCCE - Risk Communication and Community Engagement
RH - Reproductive Health
RMNCAHN - Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health & Nutrition
RUTF - Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
SACCOs - Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies
SADC - Southern African Development Community
SAM - Severe Acute Malnutrition
SBC - Social Behavior Change
SBCC - Social Behaviour Change Communication
SCRALA - Strengthening Climate Resilience in Agricultural Livelihoods in Africa
SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
SEEA - Systems of Environmental-Economic Accounting

SheCan - An initiative supporting women smallholder farmers
(not an acronym, but the name of the project)
SMART - Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief
and Transitions
SMEs - Small and Medium Enterprises
SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
Strategic Priorities (SP)
SUN II - Scaling Up Nutrition Phase II
SWAP - System Wide Action Plan
TB - Tuberculosis
TEVETA - Technical Education, Vocational, and
Entrepreneurship Training Authority
TIP - Trafficking in Persons
TOT - Training of Trainers
TPIN - Taxpayer Identification Number
TWG - Technical Working Group
UN - United Nations
UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCG - United Nations Communications Group
UNCT - United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and
Development
UNDIS - United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural
Organization
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Fund
UNINFO - United Nations Information System
UniPod - University Innovation Pod
UNSCR - United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSDCF - United Nations Sustainable Development
Cooperation Framework
UNZA - University of Zambia
UPR - Universal Periodic Review
USAID ACHIEVE - United States Agency for International
Development - ACHIEVE Project
VAWG - Violence Against Women and Girls

VLSAs - Village Savings and Loan Associations
VSLAs - Village Savings and Loan Associations
VWASHE - Village Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Education
WASH - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WDP - Ward Development Plans
WFP - World Food Programme
WHO - World Health Organization
WOAH - World Organisation for Animal Health
ZAMMSA - Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency
ZANACO - Zambia National Commercial Bank
ZAPD - Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities
ZEMA - Zambia Environmental Management Agency
ZFE - Zambia Federation of Employers
ZHDS - Zambia Health Data Survey
ZIPAR - Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research
ZMW: Zambian Kwacha
ZRA - Zambia Revenue Authority



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