

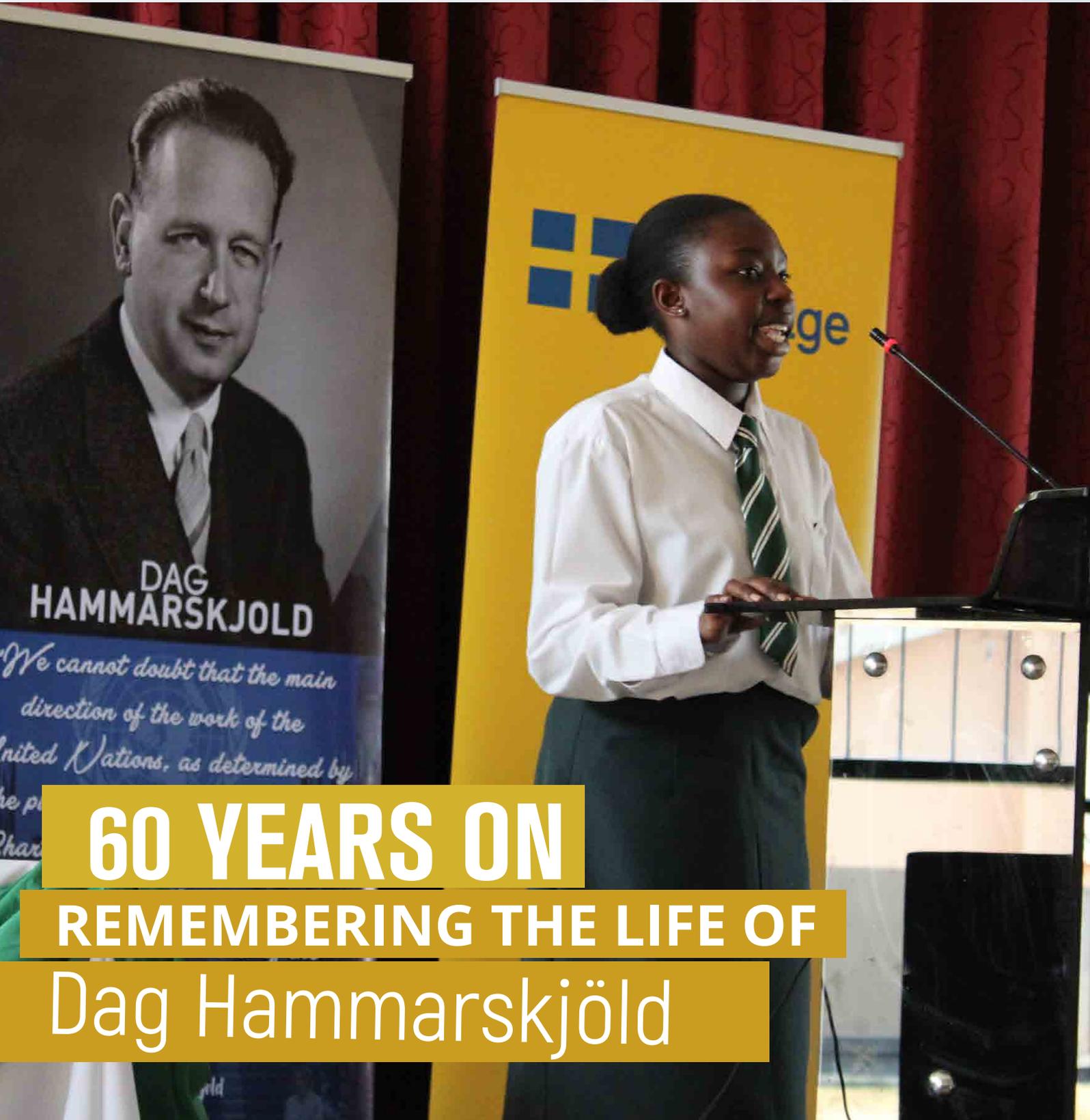
JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021



UNITED NATIONS  
ZAMBIA



# NEWS LETTER



DAG  
HAMMARSKJÖLD

*We cannot doubt that the main  
direction of the work of the  
United Nations, as determined by*

**60 YEARS ON**  
**REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF**  
Dag Hammarskjöld

# FOREWORD

from the Resident Coordinator



I welcome you to the UN Zambia Newsletter covering the period July – September 2021.

In this issue you will read about UN Zambia support to Zambia's electoral process, including the 12 August general election, our COVID-19 response and work around resilience to climate change shocks. Another major event is the commemoration of 60 years since the death of second UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld who died in Ndola while on a peace mission involving Republic of the Congo, now DRC. I am happy to note that the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Ms Bintou Keita participated in the observance held in Ndola. Other stories in this issue show our work on Social Cash Transfers, nutrition and the decent work agenda.

In the context of the 12 August elections, the UN in Zambia provided support to various institutions of democracy through its Democracy Strengthening Zambia (DSZ) Project. We will continue to support the government to strengthen democracy through post-election interventions. Other support included on the Coalition for Peaceful Elections in Zambia, Early Warning System and the iVerify platform to counter misinformation and hate speech.

As the UN we wish to commend the Government of the Republic of Zambia for playing a sustained role in promoting peace in Africa at large. We note that Zambia has continued to lead by example in the SADC region and globally as a beacon of peace.

Thank you and happy reading.

**Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio**

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# UN Country Team meets with the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia



**O**n 28 September, the United Nations Country Team led by the UN Resident Country Coordinator, Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio paid a courtesy visit to the newly elected Vice President of Zambia, Her Honour Mrs. Mutale Nalumango. The meeting involved discussions where key issues affecting socio economic progress and the future of the country were underlined, including strengthening future partnerships between Zambia and the United Nations in the country.

During her remarks, Dr Gadio praised the government of Zambia for undertaking a peaceful leadership transition process and commended the empowerment and participation of women in leadership roles. "Your honour, following the 12 August elections and the peaceful transition of leadership, I wish to commend the Government and the people of the Republic of Zambia for maintaining political stability

in the country," said Dr Gadio.

While acknowledging the presence of the UN and its poignant impact in the Zambian community, Vice President Nalumango applauded the continued work of the organization in supporting the accomplishment of positive transformation outcomes in Zambia's development. The Vice President asserted that, "The United Nations system is an essential partner to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have placed poverty eradication as the overarching goal." She assured that the Zambian government will be very action oriented and remains committed to working hand in hand with the UN in enhancing the transformation agenda to serve the people of Zambia.

Furthermore, given the current fight against COVID-19, the Vice President noted the UN's dedicated involvement and support

in making Zambia COVID-19 free through emphasis on strengthening the recovery efforts.

"We also recognized the support being rendered in the COVID-19 Recovery Needs Assessment (CRNA) to assess the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic." conveyed the Vice President. She expressed certainty that the support provided by the UN will contribute to mitigation of the shocks of the pandemic to the social economic structure of the country.

This partnership remains an important step in affirming Zambia as a beacon of change and inspiration for developing countries, not just on the continent but globally in achieving sustainable development.



# 60 years on

## Remembering the life and legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld



The United Nations in Zambia partnered with the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka to organise commemorative events to mark 60 years since the death of Dag Hammarskjöld who at the time was serving as the Second Secretary-General of the United Nations. Hammarskjöld was killed in 1961 in a plane crash in Ndola while on a UN mission to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Republic of the Congo, now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

On 18 September 2021, a moving ceremony was held at the site where the plane carrying Hammarskjöld and his staff fell. Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) Bintou Keita was among dignitaries that attended the event in Ndola. Ms Keita said that Dag Hammarskjöld was a reference and an inspiration as the leading diplomat of his generation.

"By promoting dialogue, tolerance, and mutual understanding, by pushing creative solutions to the most complex issues of his time, he still embodies today the values and the ideals that guide the United Nations' work. He also led the way in shaping our institution into an active force in making and keeping peace," said Ms Keita.

In introducing the SRSG, UN Zambia Resident

Coordinator Dr Coumba Mar Gadio said the UN in Zambia was committed to remembering the legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld because keeping his memory alive offers many lessons about peace. While describing Dag Hammarskjöld as one of the world's finest diplomats, Dr. Gadio called for concerted efforts by everyone in promoting peace. "We may not have to pay with the ultimate price like it was with the man we are remembering today, but there is something we can all do, including promoting peace," added Dr Gadio.

In his remarks Copperbelt Minister Elisha Matambo, MP, who was the Guest of Honour said that the Government will continue to value the ideas of Dag Hammarskjöld, who demonstrated courage and believed in dialogue and cooperation. Mr. Matambo also highlighted the Government's commitment to inclusion of youth in development processes.

"The New Dawn Government recognises the youth as partners in leadership, business and decision-making and is committed to ensure that our country continues on a path that promotes the ideals of peace among our youth", said Mr. Matambo.

And Swedish Vice-Minister for

International Development Ms Janine Alma Ericson noted that Dag Hammarskjöld is remembered for achievements in bringing peace through preventive diplomacy.

"Dag Hammarskjöld believed that a problem should be solved at an early stage, preventing it from getting bigger and more complicated. He also introduced preventive diplomacy," said Ms Ericson.

"Dag Hammarskjöld believed in equality between people and nations. He was a true champion of peace with an extraordinary sense of duty."

In a vote of thanks, a student from Fatima Girls Secondary School, Chileshe Kafwilo, noted that the commemoration was very important in keeping the history of Dag Hammarskjöld alive and enabling all an opportunity to learn about peace.

Representatives of the Swedish veterans who at the time of Dag Hammarskjöld's demise were serving as peacekeepers in the DRC also spoke at the event - Bengt Wicksén, First Vice Chair of the Association of Swedish UN Veterans in the DRC and Captain Mats Fogelmark, Head of the Swedish Armed Forces Department of Veteran Affairs.

Other activities organised that the UN in Zambia and Embassy of Sweden organised in partnership with the Ministry of Education were school debates on peace and a poetry writing contest, both involving secondary schools in Ndola. Further, guests at the commemoration were treated to a rich photo exhibition about Dag Hammarskjöld and week earlier, a virtual discussion was organised on the role of youth in peace building. Programmes on Radio Icengelo and ZNBC Radio 2 also helped to spread awareness about Hammarskjöld with the Swedish Ambassador to Zambia and Resident Coordinator making appearances.

It is still clear that six decades since his passing, Dag Hammarskjöld continues to hold a special place in history as a peace maker with his legacy inspiring many, young and old alike, to work for peace.



# UNAIDS and UNCG Support COVID-19 awareness drive in Lusaka District



UNCG Crisis Team Chair, Alice Saili presents materials and equipment for community engagement activities to Lusaka Provincial Health Director Dr Consity Mwale.

As part of continued efforts to support Zambia’s fight against the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations in Zambia through UNAIDS and the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) supported the Ministry of Health to conduct COVID-19 community engagement and awareness activities in six sub districts of Lusaka from 18 August to 1 September 2021. The community engagement activities that were conducted in Chawama, Chilenje, Matero, Chelstone, Kanyama and Chipata compounds were aimed at promoting the Five Golden Rules of preventing COVID-19 including masking up, social distancing, frequent hand hygiene, and early access of health services when sick. The activities also included efforts to fight disinformation and encourage people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Public health officers and community volunteers also distributed 2,000 facemasks and 20,000 posters to community members.

UNAIDS Country Director for Zambia, Dr Tharcisse Barihuta, commended the UNCG for playing a vital role in information dissemination not only to UN staff but to the public in the spirit of ensuring that no-one is left behind.

Dr Barihuta explained that in addition to ongoing support, UNAIDS decided to complement UN Zambia support by providing

fuel for the community engagement activities, purchase megaphones and batteries.

“I hope that the community engagement would help protect the gains of HIV service delivery particularly to keep people living with HIV protected from COVID-19 and most importantly continue accessing health facilities for ARVs

treatment. This is only possible if they receive correct information about the pandemic through such platforms, he said.

Speaking when he received equipment and materials for the community engagement activities from UNCG Crisis Team Chair Ms Alice Saili, Lusaka Provincial Health Director Dr Consity Mwale highlighted the importance of partnerships and appreciated the UN in Zambia for being an all-weather partner in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and in promoting good health.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in Zambia, the UN has through its agencies supported Zambia’s response across several sectors including being part of government-led Risk Communication and Community Engagement efforts, supporting the development of the multisectoral response plan and providing financial and technical support as well as materials such as testing kits, oxygen facilities, improving water and sanitation and Personal Protective Equipment, among other areas.



UNCG Crisis Team members and Ministry of Health officials display some of the materials provided by the UN family.



# CLIMATE SMART

## How growing food for my family turned into a business

World Food Programme training is empowering farmers in Zambia to increase their yields of crops that can withstand shocks



**M**ainner, her husband and their four children live in the town of Pemba, where she has managed to transition from subsistence farmer into a successful business owner, supplying vast amounts of nutritious crops for food producers – despite the ever-present risk of drought and floods destroying all.

"I used to struggle to feed my family or dress my children, but my life changed for the better when I diversified my farm and started selling in bulk," says Mainner, who like thousands of farmers in Zambia's Southern Province, is supported by the World Food Programme (WFP).

In 2017, Mainner started working with WFP to boost and diversify her yield. Before that, she only grew maize – a crop that is highly susceptible to drought and flooding. The so-called climate-smart practices she acquired from WFP meant she would no

longer loosen the soil before planting, which leads to its progressive degradation and loss of nutrients.

Training in conservation agriculture changed her prospects. She began to use organic fertilizer and a technique of minimal soil disturbance to grow a variety of drought-tolerant crops. "This improved my yields, income from selling and nutrition for my family," she says.

Mainner is also empowered by access to climate information – WFP has installed 165 rain gauges in the area. Farmers are trained to measure, record and disseminate rainfall data, which helps them to make informed decisions on the appropriate crops for the given season. "If I'm told that there won't be much rain in a season, I go for short-maturing varieties," she says. "I share all this information with my fellow farmers. If they

are affected by climate shocks, I am too. I lose business if I can't aggregate their crops."

Mainner decided to start bulking and selling aggregated crops through WFP's Virtual Farmers Market mobile app, which connects farmers with potential buyers, helping them get more competitive prices. She also sells to larger buyers from Pemba town.

"Before a season starts, I ask buyers about their demand for the year. I share this information with the farmers I buy from so that we can meet their demands," she adds. Mainner hires a tractor to collect produce from hard-to-reach areas. She stores all her aggregated crops in airtight bags – a low-cost, post-harvest tech that eliminates the risk of pests by suffocating any insects and preventing others from entering. This helps to reduce food losses and allows Mainner to sell her produce when market prices are higher.

"Before, I stored crops in my house and I could only aggregate small amounts," she says. "Now, I buy from almost 400 farmers. My dream is to start selling fertilizer and seeds as well. It will help farmers access what they need without having to travel long distances into town."

To improve healthy diets, Mainner advocates for farmers to start growing nutritious crops and processing healthy food. "I've started to make a range of food products out of cowpeas, soybeans, orange maize and groundnuts to feed my family," she says. "We no longer have a problem with nutrition. We make our own food and can afford to buy what we do not grow," she says.

Despite success stories such as hers, the fact that in Zambia 35 percent of children aged under 5 suffer stunting and 12 percent are underweight suggests that food systems – the production, distribution and consumption of foods – are not robust enough to meet the needs of large sections of society.



# ILO under GRZ-UNJP-GBV Phase II Project Trains 81 Ministry of Community Development and Social Services Officials in Community Savings Groups

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique through the Government of the Republic of Zambia –United Nations Joint Programme (GRZ-UNJP) on GBV Phase II Project has concluded a series of five-day trainings in Savings and Credit Groups for 81 officials across the country at the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS).

Having completed the trainings, it is hoped that with support from the ILO, the Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) and supervisors would consequently conduct community based trainings to a target of 500 GBV survivors and those at risk, in savings and credit groups- using the Community Savings Groups (CSG) methodology in 15 districts, where the project is being implemented.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia and five United Nations Agencies with support from Sweden and Ireland are currently implementing the GRZ-UNJP-GBV Phase II. The five participating UN Agencies are: the ILO, International Organization

for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

The joint programme, which runs from 2019 to 2022 is a multi-partner programme designed to reduce the prevalence of GBV in Zambia. The programme builds on and consolidates the gains made in the GRZ-UN Joint Programme Phase I implemented from 2012 to 2017.

The ILO is responsible for the component on economic empowerment that is ensuring that GBV survivors, those at risk as well as communities are empowered so as to break the cycle of abuse. The main objective of the virtual trainings, which were provided via Zoom platform to ToTs and supervisors, was to strengthen and support GBV survivors and those at risk in the formation of savings and credit groups. In order to achieve this objective, the program trainings covered cardinal topics such as: overview of community savings groups, stages of savings group formation, mechanisms of savings groups, gender

equality, group leadership and elections. Others were: development of a community savings group constitution, first savings meeting, first loan meeting, first loan repayment meeting, share out, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation, introduction to data collection tools, field experience sharing/ observations, provincial/districts work plans and budgets, as well as post evaluation/ training evaluation.

The participants in the trainings for supervisors were drawn from the 10 provincial community development offices of Central, Eastern, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern, North-western, Southern and Western Provinces, while the ToTs were from the 15 District Community Development Offices of Chililabombwe, Chinsali, Choma, Itezhi-Tezhi, Kabwe, Kalumbila, Kasama, Lundazi, Lusaka, Mansa, Mazabuka, Mongu, Mumbwa, Senanga and Solwezi Districts of Zambia respectively.

Of the 81 officials trained, 21 were from the provincial offices (13 males and 8 females), while 60 came from 15 districts offices (41 females and 19 males). Once the trainings reach the target of 500 GBV survivors and those at risk, it is hoped that participants will not only be empowered economically, but will also be able to confront and challenge gender abuse and the negative social and cultural norms present in their communities.

The ILO additionally provided start-up kits (material/ financial support) worth ZMW 658,000.00 kwacha to 329 individuals out of 398 trained GBV survivors and those at risk as part of its economic empowerment strategy to aid the affected individuals.



# 5 WAYS TO SPEND CASH ASSISTANCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The power of unconditional emergency cash transfers is the freedom beneficiaries have to use the K2,400 on the most immediate needs

In response to challenges brought about by COVID-19, the Government of Zambia and the United Nations through WFP, UNICEF, ILO and UNDP are working together to provide cash assistance to 1.2 million vulnerable people to help them meet their basic needs during the pandemic. Below, we look at how different households have used the ZMW2,400 (\$106), which covers a six-month emergency period.

## What this cash assistance means to beneficiaries



John, a wheelchair user, outside his home in Kitwe with his family. Photo: WFP/Sophie Smeulders

### John Ilunga, 25, Kitwe

In 2015, John Ilunga was working in a cement factory when a heavy bucket of cement mix fell on his neck, paralyzing him from the neck down. Ilunga, 25, lives with his parents, seven siblings, and two nieces, in Kitwe.

"My siblings used to work in the mines and furniture factories two to three times a week, earning just enough for us to get by and pay for my basic medical needs." Ilunga was seeing his body get weaker and weaker by the day, until he woke up to a message saying that his family would receive USD106 through mobile money to help meet their food and other essential needs.

The cash assistance means that the family can now buy nutritious food. "My father used some of the money to buy eggs to help with my recovery. He also bought maize meal, soy chunks, bread, tomatoes and onions," says Ilunga.



Agnes' market stand has been drastically boosted after receiving the Covid-19 Emergency Cash Transfer assistance. Photo credit: UNICEF/Zambia/2021/Mukopole

### Agnes Mumba, 56, lost her husband in 2002. Out of her five children, she has outlived two. Agnes lives in Ndola, the second largest city of Zambia.

"Since my husband died, life has not been easy. It's been a struggle looking after my children. My only source of income came from buying and reselling roasted groundnuts outside my home. When we had no sales, we had no money and couldn't afford to buy other food. We would only eat roasted groundnuts on those days," Agnes says.

Agnes used half of her cash assistance to expand her business. She also bought iron sheets to improve her small market stand. "I'm now able to make around 20 to 50 kwacha profit per day. I keep investing the profit back into the business to ensure I can survive after the cash assistance stops," Agnes says. "I'm planning on using the rest of the cash to pay for my daughter to re-sit her Grade 12 exams and send my eldest son who is in college money for food.





Emmanuel Katwishi with his grandchild outside their house. Photo credit: UNICEF/Zambia/2021/Mukopole

**Emmanuel Katwishi is 62 years old and lives in Mufulira, known for copper mining. He lives with his wife, two children and two grandchildren.**

For the last few years, mobility has been a challenge for Emmanuel. He suffers from back pain, leg pain and walks with a stick. His eldest son has a hearing impairment and is unable to work. Emmanuel has been using the cash assistance to buy fertilizer to help his maize crops grow on a rented plot four hours away from his home, tended to by his wife.

"I want to make sure I can support my family once the cash assistance stops. I hope to have a good harvest and get at least 15 x 50kg bags of maize," says Emmanuel.

He plans on using some of his harvest to feed his family and selling the surplus to buy other food items such as fish and beans. Emmanuel used his remaining cash to expand the market stall outside his home where his wife sells samosas.



Philemon Chisala based in Mufulira district, Copperbelt province with his daughter and grandchild. Photo credit: UNICEF/Zambia/2021/Mukopole

**Philemon Chisala is 60 and a father of six. He helps care for his five grandchildren and daughter living with autism.**

Philemon, who has been a farmer all his life, used some of his cash to rent an extra plot of land. "On my old plot, I only used to harvest around 10 x 50kg bags of maize. With my new plot, I hope to harvest around 30 x 50kg bags of maize," he says.

Philemon will use his harvest to feed his family, buy other types of food such as fish and beans and pay for his children's school fees. He also uses his extra savings to buy masks and soap to keep safe during the pandemic, as well as healthy food to keep his family strong.

# COVID PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

**Zambia's national COVID-19 vaccination campaign is underway. All eligible persons are encouraged to receive the vaccination.**



# Maintaining Essential Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Zambia

Working to avoid wider negative health impacts during the pandemic.



With COVID-19 placing an unprecedented strain on health services around the world, the importance of addressing the pandemic while also ensuring the delivery of essential basic health services cannot be overstated.

In Luapula Province, in the northern part of Zambia, maintaining essential health services for children during the pandemic involves making sure health workers have the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they need to carry out their work safely, and ensuring the essential medicines and routine vaccines remain in stock.

"It is not an easy task from our end," said Emilda Banda, a registered nurse working in the children's ward at Mansa General Hospital in the Luapula provincial capital. To help address the challenges faced during the pandemic, UNICEF and its partners through the Ministry of Health have rehabilitated the oxygen plant at Mansa General Hospital, provided oxygen concentrators to hospitals and health centres, and delivered routine traditional vaccines and 'inter-agency emergency health kits' which provide a package of essential medicines.

"The support received through UNICEF and partners has really cushioned the supplies in the province," said Mrs Martina Ngoma Musonda, the Provincial Chief Pharmacist.

"I can confidently say we received the supplies and made the necessary distributions to hospitals and health facilities."

Dr Mabvuto Zulu, the Mansa General Hospital Acting Superintendent, says the increase in oxygen supplies has been critical at this time, for patients with COVID-19 as well as patients with other respiratory illnesses. "The support received has gone a long way in helping save lives and has assisted the hospital to be able to handle various cases better."

"With the assistance of the oxygen concentrators, children receive oxygen support and through continuous close monitoring and care, the babies are resuscitated," says nurse Banda. With support from the Federal Republic of Germany through the KFW Development Bank and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), UNICEF has been able to deliver a total of 310 oxygen concentrators (260 and 50 respectively) to the Ministry of Health as part of the COVID-19 response. Swedish support through UNICEF has also funded the rehabilitation of oxygen plants at UTH's Children's Hospital in Lusaka, Lewanika General Hospital (Mongu) and Mansa General Hospital.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the wider health system in Zambia has been significant.

"The COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed us healthcare staff with five having tested positive," said nurse-in-charge Mrs Grace Chilongo at the Chilanga health centre, south of Zambia's capital city Lusaka.

"Yet service provision had to continue," she says. "We had a sudden decrease in the number of people seeking healthcare services. We had to find ways to ensure that people in the community received proper healthcare services and did not just stay home."

The health centre, which serves a population of around 23,000 people, started their outreach work with those closest at hand - educating those visiting the centre so that they left with a good understanding of the COVID-19 public health guidelines and the need to continue using health care services.

Thanks to the arrival of PPE including masks, they were also able to improve infection prevention and control and make the health centre a safer place for staff and visitors.

"With these initiatives in place and the PPE availability, the number of community members coming to receive professional medical healthcare services has increased leading to an increased demand for essential medicines," said Mrs Chilongo.

UNICEF and its partners Sida, FCDO, KFW and the World Bank have procured 4,074 health kits containing essential medicines which have been distributed to all ten provinces of Zambia to help maintain essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic, covering the needs of 5.46 million people.

- By Tiwine Muchipa, Youth Engagement and Communications Associate, UNICEF Zambia



# ILO, UNJSP II Successfully Hold First-Ever Virtual, Fourth Annual Social Protection Week



The International Labour Organization (ILO) under the United Nations Joint Programme for Social Protection Phase II (UNJSP II) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security recently held the 4th annual Social Protection week which was for the first time ever, held virtually.

The virtual Zambia Social Protection Week 2021 which took place from 28th June to 2nd July, was held under the theme "Responsive Social Protection in a Changing World". This was a timely theme as the whole world is grappling with how to live in the 'better normal' sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The annual Social Protection Week is an open, public event that seeks to bring together a range of stakeholders including Government, Civil Society Organizations, Academia, Faith-Based Organizations, social partners, cooperating partners, private sector, media and the general public. This year's programme saw the employment of a variety of social media networks serving as platforms for initiation and shaping of public debate. The various platforms enabled all participants a

chance to make their voices heard and to contribute to the development of social protection in Zambia.

The week was characterised by a series of discussions that were held virtually through the use of several multi-media platforms that included radio, television, Zoom meetings, Facebook Live and Twitter.

### Topics of discussion included:

Rights of domestic workers in Zambia; Better systems for social protection service delivery in Zambia; Impact of COVID-19 among learners with disabilities; Using data for decision-making in social protection programs; Extension of coverage to the informal economy; Coordination for Sound and Responsive Social Protection systems; A case of the Single Windows Approach; Responsive Social Protection in A Climate Change Environment; Social Accountability for Responsive Social Protection, A Review of Policy Responses and Potential Alternatives for Responsive and sustainable social protection systems in the context of COVID-19.

Speaking at the virtual media briefing, ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Mr. George Okutho stated that it was gratifying that the virtual Social Protection Week had brought together

various stakeholders; the Government and non-state actors to re-design social protection systems in the country. Mr. Okutho added that: "the timing of the Social Protection Week was even more critical as Zambia re-builds its economy, health and livelihoods following the devastating impact of COVID-19".

Meanwhile, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services Permanent Secretary Ms. Pamela Chibonga-Kabamba observed that the changing social protection needs would require new strategies to eradicate poverty and vulnerabilities among the Zambian population.

The World Food Programme representative Ms. Jennifer Bitonde expressed the importance of social protection in enhancing the resilience and adaptive capacity of people to cope with economic shocks. Ms. Bitonde added that: "effective social protection programmes maintain standards of living, promote people's wellbeing and can provide safety nets to prevent the most vulnerable from slipping into poverty".

Meanwhile, Ministry of Labour and Social Security Permanent Secretary Mr. Chanda Kaziya said the Government had put in place measures aimed at protecting workers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally Mr. Kaziya expressed gratitude to the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Germany and the European Union for their financial support towards enhancing social protection in the country.

The event had an overall virtual reach of 78,563 and an attendance of 15,812 people across social media platforms. This did not however depict the total estimated audience engagement for each radio/television station with a combined weekly audience of 20.1 million across the 6 radio stations.

This virtual interface would be a good platform for the poverty reduction and vulnerability cluster to take advantage of to continue with ongoing stakeholder engagement.



# SPIREWORLD Project

## Empowers Informal Workers in Dairy Cooperatives



The Government of the Republic of Zambia and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique recently conducted site visits to several dairy cooperative unions across Zambia. These visits revealed impressive socio-economic gains being made by the women folk and other residents operating under these cooperatives. The sites visited included the Magoye and Munjile Milk Collection Centres in the Southern Province as well as the Fisenge and Kampemembe Milk Collection Centres

in the Copperbelt. These site visits by The Government and the ILO were made possible through a collaboration with the Finnish Embassy in Zambia, the National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA), the Workers' Compensation Fund Control Board (WCFCB), and the Zambia Industrial Commercial Bank (ZICB) who as partners were also present at the event.

The Cooperative Unions which draw membership from the Dairy Association of Zambia operate under the Social

Protection for Informal and Rural Economy Workers (SPIREWORLD) Project in Mazabuka and Luanshya districts respectively.

The SPIREWORLD Project, which has been in operation from 2017 to-date, was co-founded by the Government of Finland, through the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL and implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security through NAPSA and WCFCB, with technical support from the ILO. NAPSA has further signed a Memorandum of Understanding



(MoU) with ZICB, Mayfair Insurance Company Zambia, and the Dairy Association of Zambia.

The Fisenge Dairy Business Cooperative Union is notably comprised of women from Luanshya and other communities. Dating back to its inception in 2008, the cooperative has contributed greatly to the betterment of the women's livelihoods and the improvement in the standard of living of their dependents.

It all began with one woman who donated 10 of her own cows to other women after drawing inspiration from other countries like Kenya. The first primary cooperative that was formed and received the 10 cows was the Jele Cooperative. When these cows gave birth to female calves, they were then given to other women as part of a "pass on a gift" program. The expectation was that under this mode of operation each of the beneficiary's personal cattle portfolios would increase.

Fisenge impressively produces approximately 2,300 litres of milk per day from its farmers which is sold as raw milk to Parmalat Zambia Ltd and Dairy Gold, a subsidiary of Trade Kings group of companies.

Among the women supplying milk to Fisenge Dairy Business Cooperative Union is Mrs. Evelyn Chona Malambo. Mrs. Malambo narrates that she started dairy farming in 2009 after her friend from the same community gave her a calf to rear. She adds that she has found dairy farming to be a lucrative business as she is able to provide for her family and sponsor her children's education.

"Dairy farming is a lucrative business. Imagine, I started with one cow, but now I have 18 animals, out of these I am milking nine. I am bringing in 60 litres of milk per day now just because I am only milking four animals and the other animals have been weaned and are expecting," explains Mrs. Malambo.

The 60-year-old woman has since urged women in the area to embrace dairy farming saying that there are a lot of benefits derived from the activity. "Diary animals are docile and friendly to women. It is easier for the women to do dairy farming. We are 25 and only six women are supplying milk to Fisenge Dairy Business Cooperative Union," says Mrs. Malambo.

Furthermore, the stakeholders used the occasion to launch a new complimentary mobile platform that will allow the dairy farmers to make registrations and contributions from their mobile phones at anytime from anywhere.

Additionally, ZICB has made available ZMW 2, 000,000 Kwacha as credit facility to support qualifying dairy farmers with micro loans.

Mrs Malambo praises this additional effort by ZICB saying that the micro loans will not only help dairy farmers buy medicines for the animals when they get sick, but will also aid in the provision of adequate and sufficient feed which will result in increased productivity from her cows.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Labour and Social Security Permanent Secretary Mr. Chanda Kaziya observed that the pilot project, which seeks to extend social protection coverage to the informal sector, has scored successes to warrant full scale implementation across the country.

Mr. Kaziya added that it was pleasing that NAPSA has implemented new solutions that would facilitate easy and flexible payment structures for both future and past contributions without penalties, thereby providing relief to dairy farmers whose incomes are irregular and easily affected by weather patterns.

"This will be a huge boost as the major challenge faced by the informal sector in general and small-scale farmers in particular is lack of access to affordable credit," said Mr. Kaziya. "This benefit could not have come at a better time than this when the country is experiencing significantly high interest rates that make borrowing a bit expensive, especially for small scale farmers."

Further, ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Mr. George Okutho, urged dairy farmers to take advantage of the financial offerings to make productive investments to their farming initiatives, as well as to make savings for retirement when they could no longer work and earn as they used to. "We expect to receive feedback on the possible areas of improvement to our service quality and product offering.

Other key features we will be looking to incorporate into our product offering include weather index insurance- which is intended to protect farmers against weather-related losses; as well as worker compensation- to provide income support should you become sick or injured through a work-related incident," said Mr. Okutho.

Meanwhile, NAPSA Director-General Mr. Yollard Kachinda said his organisation has developed a new tailor-made benefits package with expanded benefits being piloted among small scale farmers to attract members from the informal sector, stating that the new package constitutes the standard pension, invalidity and survivors' benefits with the inclusion of short term benefits of maternity and access to credit.

"The pilot will be extended to marketeers and other priority areas in order to gauge acceptability and appropriateness before full roll-out to the rest of the country," said Mr. Kachinda.

Finnish Ambassador to Zambia Her Excellency Ms. Pirjo Soumela-Chouwdhury said the ground-breaking efforts on extending social protection to informal sector workers in Zambia could provide important lessons for the whole continent and beyond.

Her Excellency Ambassador added that she was honoured to meet representatives of the women-led dairy cooperative comprising of visionary and hardworking professionals determined to make things happen.

Meanwhile, WCFCB Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer Mrs. Priscilla Bwembya thanked the Finnish Government for funding the project as it would help extend social protection coverage to the informal sector, particularly the dairy farmers in the area.



# Thomas Maleka

## Defies all Odds as He Excels in His Automotive Engineering Career

**34-year-old Thomas Maleka is married with two children. He is also the breadwinner of four siblings and the sole caregiver of his mother. Impressively, Mr. Maleka bears all these responsibilities in spite of a physical disability through income from his occupation as a heavy and light-duty professional mechanic.**

The United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection Phase II and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Social Protection team in Lusaka recently funded a countrywide disability photobank documentation to showcase and support various themed messaging on disability.

It is during the execution of this activity that the project team interacted with Thomas who demonstrated that persons with disabilities are productive members of society. This highlighted the need for persons with disabilities to be accorded reasonable accommodation and to be provided with skills that will enable them to participate on an equal basis with others.

Thomas is the only child in his family who was hit with polio at tender age of two. The disease affected his legs, thereby leaving him with a physical impairment resulting in a physical disability. Despite his physical impediment, Thomas was never swayed but determined from a young age that he would not succumb to the beliefs of society that persons with disabilities were beggars



and inferior to physically able-bodied members of society.

“Having completed my secondary school in 2013 at Temwani High School, through a government initiative, I went to Chipata province under Zambia National Service (ZNS) to study for an Automotive Mechanics light-duty level 3 Certificate which I acquired in three years. When I came back I worked for ZNS and Road Development Agency (RDA) where I became a workshop supervisor despite my disability. As I worked I saved up money to take myself to school and finally in 2016 I went to NORTEC [Northern Technical College] to study heavy duty certificated mechanics. My driving force has always been to change the perception of persons with disabilities,” he narrates.

Even with his accomplishments, Thomas has faced a lot of challenges in finding employment because of his disability. “When I go to fix trucks and the owners of the trucks see me they get discouraged. Some of them chase me away saying they would prefer able-bodied people to me, after some hesitation, they decide to give me a chance and when I do a great job they are impressed. Either way, I don’t resent those that chase me because I believe as a Christian when one door closes, God opens another one,” Thomas explains.

Thomas possesses the determination to not let prejudices based on his

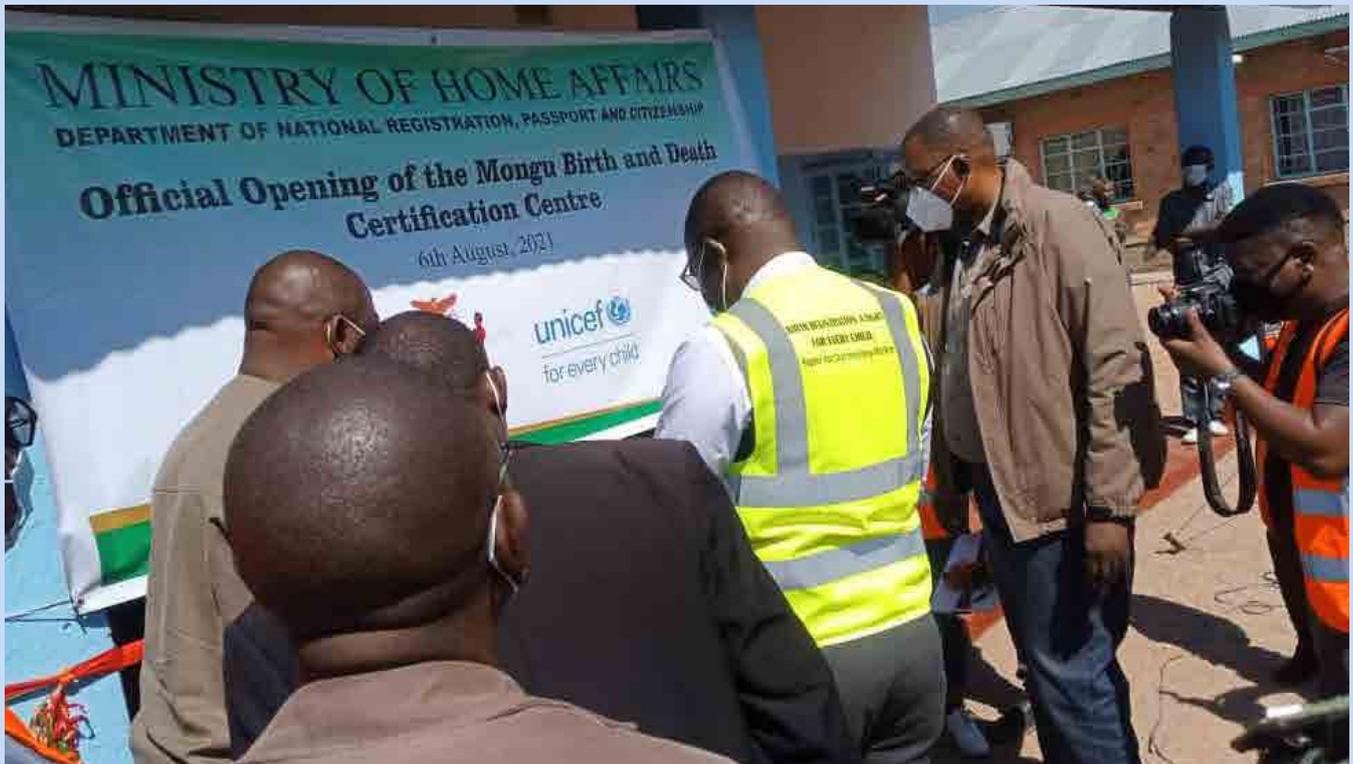
appearance deter his course towards becoming a productive member of society. It is this zeal that was cultivated by the encouragement of his lecturer in College—who saw his ability to be a great mechanic—that encouraged him to set up his own workshop as opposed to continuing a futile search for employment.

Thomas is now proudly the head and owner of a workshop. He relates: “My time of being a supervisor has given me the experience of knowing that no man is an island and so I have employed three more people who are specialized in other things but all to do with mechanics, I have a boilermaker, welder and auto work-electrician. My workers respect me because of my work ethic, and because at the end of the month I’m able to give them a salary which also helps sustain their families.”

He adds, “My advice is very short and straight to the point, the disability that affects, is the one that attacks the mind and it doesn’t matter whether you are able-bodied or disabled. I have personally seen people who are able-bodied but spending their days drinking and wasting away. Being disabled physically shouldn’t discourage you from achieving what you want.”



# Birth certification centres fully decentralised in all provinces with launch in Mongu



The official opening on 6 August 2021 of the final provincial birth certification and printing centre, in Mongu, marked the completion of several years' work to bring the delivery of this vital identity document closer to home.

"The provincial certification centres are meant to improve service delivery in the issuance of birth and death certificates," said Dr. Liya Mutale, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs, in her remarks at the launch. "People in Western Province, for example, will no longer have to wait for birth certificates to come from Lusaka."

The launch of the certification centre in Western Province, supported technically and financially by UNICEF core resources, marks the presence of certification and printing centres in every province in Zambia. Much of the work through UNICEF in other provinces was supported by the

European Union, while World Vision also supported two centres.

The new centres are one of many efforts to improve Zambia's low levels of birth certification. Other activities have included boosting ties between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Health for more birth registration desks in health centres, a communication campaign, and supporting wider digitisation plans.

This government process began in 2017 following the amendment of the Birth and Deaths Registration Act in May 2016. Prior to this, all completed application forms for birth registration from across the country had to be physically channelled to the registration office headquarters in Lusaka for issuance and the printing of certificates. This lengthy process – taking months to years- demotivated

many parents from even embarking. In some instances, documents even went missing in between districts during the transportation process. This, among other reasons, resulted in Zambia possessing one of the lowest birth registration rates in sub-Saharan Africa at 14.3% (DHS 2018) with Western Province being the lowest at 4%.

Going forward, the Government is now in the process of taking birth certification services up to the district level through the soon to be launched Integrated National Registration and Information System (INRIS), which is also receiving support from UNDP and UNICEF with funding from the Government of Japan. This will further improve the efficiency of the birth registration system and ensure that birth notifications and registrations are quickly processed, and birth certificates issued.



# UN agencies join hands to help MSMEs recover from the impact of COVID-19



In Zambia (population: 18 million), only 68 percent of females are financially included. Worse still, many women do not have control of their household budgets. Lack of financial inclusion impacts women's ability to engage in economic activities and obtain financial security. Many women run micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), such as trading goods across borders, market stalls, hair salons and restaurants among other trades. However, due to financial exclusion, they are unable to grow their business or maintain a consistent supply of input. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded women's economic opportunities due to movement restrictions which led to the temporary closure of many businesses. Subsequently, reduced working hours due to low customer patronage and limited access to supply chains has also

contributed to loss of income. These challenges have restricted the ability of small businesses to stabilise, grow and contribute to the Zambian economy.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in Zambia are partnering to address some of these issues as part of post-COVID economic recovery activities. Both agencies will also work to increase digital and financial inclusion for these underserved and vulnerable communities. UNCDF, using its capital mandate and financial instruments, will support UNDP in implementing two projects that aim to:

1. Revive and strengthen cross-border trade (specifically women-led) which has been severely impacted by COVID-

19-related border closures, resulting in supply chain disruptions, loss of income, and a drop in the quality of life of micro-traders and women in the border towns of Zambia.

2. Strengthen the livelihoods of youths by reducing barriers to credit access facilities for youth-led MSMEs that will help them recover quicker from the economic aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic

The two UN agencies recently collaborated on access to finance interventions for MSMEs, the majority of which were owned by women, including those with disabilities. Applications for small business loans from these MSMEs are deemed less attractive to financial



service providers (FSPs) as the borrowers do not offer collateral to secure the loan. This hinders the entrepreneurs' ability to invest in their business operations and growth. A loan guarantee facility, administered by UNCDF and UNDP, is a good way to address this barrier for MSMEs and improve their access to finance.

Loan guarantee facilities will allow FSPs, such as banks or microfinance institutions, to de-risk their loans to youth and women-owned MSMEs. It will allow UNCDF and UNDP to take on a percentage of the risk associated with the loans, rather than the standard scenario where FSPs take the entire lending risk.

In addition, UNCDF will deploy its expertise in digital financial inclusion and finance to provide technical assistance to FSPs and MSMEs. MSMEs will also receive support to digitize their operations, improve financial literacy and governance, with the overall objective of making them investment ready. FSPs will be supported in developing their MSME finance capabilities, including but not limited to, rolling out digital finance products, expanding their agency networks and more. UNDP and UNCDF, in collaboration with the FSPs, will define and streamline the eligibility criteria for the MSMEs that receive loans.

This activity fits well within UNCDF's strategy to build inclusive digital economies that include women, youth and rural populations, and will contribute towards existing interventions in Zambia's MSME sector. The activities will be implemented over an initial period of 12 months, with an additional 12 months to service the funds and repayments from MSMEs.

The loan guarantee facilities will provide over \$600,000 to MSMEs, a majority of which will be owned or managed by youth, women or persons with disabilities. A key aspect of the intervention is the technical assistance, offered to over 500 MSMEs, which will improve business operations and chances of success.

Lionel Laurens, UNDP Zambia Resident Representative, said: "Every sector of society has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. But women, youth and persons with disabilities have been hit harder due to a number of compounding factors including vulnerability, and exclusion, livelihoods precariousness and inequalities they experience in accessing information and

key services as well as challenges in abiding by COVID-19 restrictions and prevention measures.

"The economic impact has made these underserved groups more vulnerable, and with this new intervention, we aim to assist them to bounce back faster and recover from the negative effects of the pandemic, increase their resilience and improve their contribution to the local communities via economic participation. We aim to support MSMEs strengthen their commercial viability and profitability by securing access to finance and expanded market outlets, provision of business support and technical assistance. The new partnership between UNDP and UNCDF will fortify Zambia's MSME sector and is one of the many initiatives by the UN to ensure that the country addresses challenges brought about by the pandemic and accelerate full recovery to remain on track to achieving the SDGs. The UN is hopeful that this partnership will also ensure that digitally-enabled MSMEs will be supported and strengthened so that they will be able to extend their services to reach all Zambians."

**Isaac Holly Ogwal, UNCDF Country Lead, said:**

"The COVID-19 pandemic quickly evolved from a health crisis, into an economic and employment crisis, and MSMEs in Zambia have felt the brunt of its impact.

"The lockdowns and containment measures put in place have resulted in temporary or permanent shutdowns of MSMEs activity, leading to drops in sales, a dip in turnover, and revenue, whilst increasing operational expenses. Several MSMEs have been forced to re-focus their capital to fund household consumption and survival. This too has resulted in the loss of jobs, regrettably for the already marginalized segments of women and youth.

"Post COVID-19 recovery interventions and programmes for the MSME sector in Zambia are necessary and timely. However, they need to be broad-based to drive the economic and social recovery particularly on access to finance, access to markets, and improvement in skills base and knowledge. They also need to digitally enable MSME operations. With the UNCDF's capital mandate and an array of available financial instruments, the UN system is well-positioned with the proficiencies to offer

blended finance support, especially to the financial institutions, women, and youth enterprises to recover. The UNDP-UNCDF guarantee facility is designed to meet this exact objective."

Loan guarantee facilities have, in recent years, emerged as a blended finance instrument of choice for spurring economic development in many countries. They are a particularly relevant solution in supporting access to finance in the least developed countries such as Zambia. In these countries, MSMEs are the drivers of economic development, yet remain financially underserved as they are perceived by many financial institutions to be high risk. Loan guarantees provide a platform where modest amounts of public/donor funding can be leveraged to unlock much larger amounts of private funds towards alleviating MSME cashflow constraints.

In the context of COVID 19, loan guarantees have featured prominently as a business survival and recovery mechanism in developed and developing countries. This UNCDF-UNDP joint project will aim to maximise the strengths and technical expertise of both agencies in supporting the survival and recovery of small businesses in Zambia. Data from the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) 2014 Baseline Survey shows 97 percent of businesses are in the MSME sector, which employs 48 percent of the labour force.

UNCDF is extending its interventions in the sector, having already commenced implementation of another loan guarantee facility in Zambia jointly with the Swedish Government.

An intervention of this kind has many benefits, especially as businesses work to overcome the impact of COVID-19. Ensuring these businesses are stable in their operations and can access finance to improve and grow their businesses can have a positive impact on the Zambian business sector and economy. Most importantly, supporting women and youth-led businesses enables entrepreneurs in this space to be more resilient and continue earning income to meet their households' needs.



# UN supports the successful August 2021 general elections



Dr Godfrey Malebeka, the Executive Director of Prison Care and Counselling Association poses with a dummy cheque indicating the grant amount received for voter education for prisoners

On Tuesday 24 August 2021, the world witnessed yet another peaceful transfer of power in Zambia. On this occasion, outgoing president Edgar Lungu handed over power to the new president, His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema, Zambia's seventh president since independence in 1964. This is the third time that state power has peacefully changed hands from one party to another. Despite incidents of political violence and the loss of three lives, shrinking democratic space, selective application of the Public Order Act (POA), COVID-19 protocols, and the public media's partial coverage of parties and candidates, the election was hailed by both local and international observers as technically successful.

An unprecedented 70.6% voter turnout and the high levels of participation of women and youth – as voters, is a testament to the resilience and spirit of the people of Zambia to remain peaceful and a beacon of democracy in the

sub-region.

As a traditional ally of the people of Zambia, the UN contributed to the achievement of this historic milestone. Through its inclusive, system-wide approach support to and partnership with, among others, the ministries of Justice and Home Affairs, the Zambia Police Service, the National Assembly of Zambia, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), traditional leaders, media, the Judiciary and the Zambia Law Development Commission (ZLDC) as well as media, civil society and faith-based organisations.

Following the Constitutional Court's decision enfranchising imprisoned persons – making Zambia one of only seven African countries where prisoners have the right to vote - the UN partnered with the Ministry of Justice and the ZLDC to develop the legal framework for the exercise of this important right. In support of

citizen-driven voter education targeting women, youth, persons in lawful custody and people with disabilities, 18 civil society organisations were awarded grants with a combined value of US\$783,386. Through this support, two UN-supported CSOs - Prison Care and Counselling Association and Prisoners Future Foundation - conducted voter education and electoral process awareness activities in 39 Correctional Services facilities. This together with the ECZ's UN-supported multimedia 'Make Your Vote Count' voter education campaign, led to the unprecedented high voter turnout countrywide. To combat misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech across all news and information platforms, a UN partnership with the EU-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF) led to the establishment of the iVerify Zambia fact-checking platform. The platform, which is hosted by Panos Zimbabwe in partnership with MISA, ECZ, and BBC Media Action was particularly effective in challenging misinformation and hate speech before, during and after the elections.

Building on lessons from the

2016 elections, and with a view to mitigating the impact of election-related violence, the UN partnered with the JTF to design and deploy an election-related Early Warning and Early Response System (EWERS) under the auspices of the HRC. The EWERS, which was deployed on 1 July 2021 was supported by a network of CSO monitors in all the 116 districts of the country, feeding into a national situation room through a digital platform, SMS gateway or toll-free number (8181). Working closely with the ECZ and the ZPS, the EWERS was instrumental in risk and incident analysis, and verification to de-escalate tensions and resolve incidents. Pursuant to its constitutional mandate, the HRC used verified information from the EWERS to draw the attention of various duty-bearers to potential threats to a peaceful electoral environment.

The UN is grateful to cooperating partners – the European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, the UKaid, and USAID – through whose financial support to the UNDP's Democracy Strengthening in Zambia project, the UN was able to deliver the much-needed support to the 2021 Zambia electoral process.



Inmates attending voter information and education sessions organised by Prisoners Future Foundation at Katete Correctional Facility



# Zambian Girls 2030 Internships

— A personal story

Empowering girls  
with professional  
experience



Sylvia Mweetwa, 20, lives with her grandparents in the rural part of Choma District in Zambia's Southern Province.

"When I was in Grade 9 my father wanted to marry me off saying it was a waste of resources to continue going to school," said Sylvia. "At that point, I felt my life had come to a standstill. I still wanted to go to school and believed I would make it to Grade 10. With limited options on the way forward I decided to run away to my grandparents and start part time work in people's gardens and farms as a way to support myself in school," said Sylvia.

"This posed a slight delay in my grades as my classmates have completed secondary school by now. This did not stop me from pushing. I managed to write my Grade 9 eventually and made it to Grade 10. I am currently in Grade 11 at Mboole Primary and Secondary school where I am the chairperson of the career club."

"Being picked for the Girls 2030 internship

programme was very exciting as I was not so sure of what to expect at first. Coming to Mawaggali Trades has been the best experience of my life so far. As I was coming, I never imagined meeting a number of females specializing in automotive engineering. The career is seen as a male dominated career." I have learned a lot from my mentor, lecturer Mrs Sakala, and the female students in the course. In years to come I look forward to taking up the course and becoming one of Zambia's best known automotive engineers.

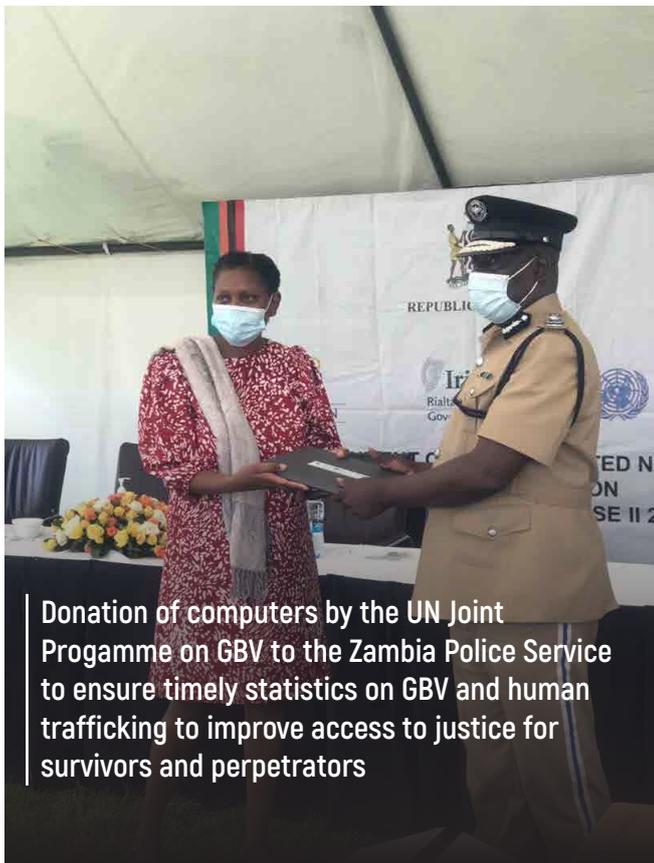
The Zambian Girls 2030 programme: "Realising my potential" - provides an opportunity to the most vulnerable pupils to be exposed and gain career inspiration. In December 2020, 25 girls in Choma District and 25 in Kasama District took part in internships with local professional mentors. Phase 2 of Zambian Girls 2030 programme was implemented in 150 schools with 5,560

girls in school clubs, 256 girls attending career camps and 50 internship placements. "Having mentored Sylvia through the internship has been amazing," said Mrs Laizah Siyanganga Sakala. "She is very inquisitive and a good learner. The internship is a good opportunity for exposure and inspiration for the girls from rural areas. I am certain that moving forward Sylvia and the other girls will set their bar high to ensure they maintain good grades and eventually pursue their dream careers," said Mrs Sakala.

The girls internship placements are based on career plans, though unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic, girls that had a health-related career choice were placed according to their second career options.

The programme is run under the Ministry of General Education with UNICEF support, and with implementing partner Restless Development, with generous funding from the London Stock Exchange Group.





Donation of computers by the UN Joint Programme on GBV to the Zambia Police Service to ensure timely statistics on GBV and human trafficking to improve access to justice for survivors and perpetrators



PICTURE FOCUS



Remembering the life and legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld



# WHO Donates COVID – 19 supplies to strengthen the health system’s response to the pandemic

The African Development Bank manager, Ms. Mary Monyau acknowledged the leadership role government had taken through the Ministry of Health to combat the COVID-19 pandemic through sensitizing communities, securing vaccines and providing medical services to the population. She said the African Development Bank working in Collaboration with the Southern African Development Community and the WHO Country Office was providing support to Zambia as part of a project aimed at strengthening capacity to respond to COVID 19 as well as reinforcing the regional coordination of SADC member states in mitigating measures against the regional spread of COVID 19. She said that the donation was part of the 1.6 million United States Dollars fund earmarked for the provision of critical supplies and complementary capacity development in the country. Africa’s third wave is picking up speed, spreading faster, and hitting harder than the second. Zambia is among the 18 countries in Africa reporting an increasing trend in new cases and was among the five that accounted for 70% of covid-19 cases during the month of June. The number of deaths reported during this third wave is also higher than those reported during the second wave and the country is among the five African countries reporting high numbers of death.



The WHO Country Representative, Dr. Nathan Bakyaíta and the African Development Bank (ADB) Manager, Mary Monyau on 1 July 2021 handed over a donation of COVID -19 supplies worth one million United States dollars to support the health system’s response to the pandemic. The donation which included personal protective equipment, ventilators, laboratory reagents and test kits has been made possible through support provided to the WHO Country Office by the ADB working in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This support has been channelled through a project which is aimed at strengthening epidemic preparedness and response and purchase of biomedical equipment, personal protective equipment and diagnostics.

The Permanent Secretary for Technical Services at the

Ministry of Health, Dr. Kennedy Malama received the donation during the national COVID-19 briefing. He stated that the country was experiencing a surge in the number of cases and deaths and called for unity of purpose and continued support in the implementation of the national multi-sectoral plan. He thanked the SADC, ADB and the WHO Country Office for supporting the key pillars in the response. Dr Malama said that the donation would help the country in its prevention efforts and treatment of those affected. He also commended the ADB, SADC and WHO for taking a regional approach to supporting countries while emphasizing the fact that no country was safe until all were safe.

Speaking during the ceremony, the WHO Representative, Dr. Nathan Bakyaíta, said that with the COVID-19 resurgence, WHO was working with other

UN agencies and other partners to urgently boost all interventions and critical care capacity including addressing the critical need for oxygen in hospitals. “This situation makes it even more urgent that we use all the tools at our disposal to prevent transmission: the consistent adherence to the five golden rules in combination with vaccination,” He said.



# Strengthening Zambia's Health Workforce for COVID-19 Case Management

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous pressure on the health workforce in all countries worldwide. Doctors, nurses and other health personnel have been forced to take on long and exhausting hours, tirelessly saving the lives of so many in treatment centres and Intensive Care Units (ICU). In some parts of the world, an evening ritual saw thousands of people taking to their windows and balconies every day to applaud and praise these efforts.

More than 21 months into the pandemic, the applause has ebbed as people are learning to live with the pandemic but with COVID-19 waves continuing to crash down on countries, the struggle of health workers continues.

Even before COVID-19, Zambia faced a shortage of health personnel and by the end of 2020, the country's population of 17 885 422 people had only 21 214 nurses, 2796 doctors, 2484 lab personnel and 479 nutritionists among other cadres. As the pandemic continues, more health facilities and health personnel are being repurposed to COVID-19 treatment centres, further depriving the system of infrastructure and personnel for routine essential health services.

There is an acute shortage of staff in COVID-19 treatment centres, necessitating long

working hours for the stretched health workforce which compromises the quality of care being offered to patients, especially those that need critical care. This human resource shortage is also increasing staff burnout, significantly reducing the quality of care, and resulting in avoidable mortality and an increase in health worker infections.

"Experiencing the workload on us all, one dreads to think what the situation on the ground was when we had not joined the health workers at the various institutions," says one of 48 doctors recruited and trained by WHO on behalf of the Ministry. At the request of the Ministry of Health and with thanks to the contribution from Canada, WHO Zambia supported the strengthening of the health workforce by recruiting 266 health workers on short term assignment (48 medical doctors, 185 nurses, 20 nutritionists and 14 biomedical engineers) covering their salaries and providing training to manage COVID-19 cases in isolation centres all over the country.

**48 medical doctors, 185 nurses, 20 nutritionists and 14 biomedical engineers are part of an WHO effort to support the MoH in strengthening the health workforce in Zambia for COVID-19 case management**



**"The team needed some assistance and felt I am ready (...) I will keep doing my best in the time I have to assist in ICU", says one of the 185 nurses trained by WHO.**

"From my interactions [with others] and experience I know that all members of the team trained by WHO continue to contribute massively to the better health of our people at the various institutions filling a huge lacuna in Health Personnel we found at the institutions and supporting the response to not only COVID-19 but all medical conditions in general", he adds.

While WHO and other partners continue to support the Ministry of Health, there is something that every one of us can contribute to alleviating some of the pressure on the health workforce: get vaccinated if you can and continue to follow the golden rules: maintain at least a 1-metre distance from others, cover your mouth when coughing and sneeze in your elbow, clean your hands

frequently and wear a mask, particularly in enclosed, crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

Even if the third wave in Zambia has now ebbed - with just over 3% of the Zambian population fully vaccinated, the fourth wave is already lurking, and the struggle of health workers is set to continue into the unforeseeable future. Individuals do well to call to mind the many sacrifices of our doctors, nurses and other health workers and to applaud the tireless efforts of the health force in saving all those who have been affected by the COVID-19 virus.



# Cash grants power hopes for refugees from DR Congo

The World Food Programme marks international refugee day with a visit to the Mantapala refugee settlement in Zambia



**"We came to Zambia because we were afraid of dying," says Mulumbwa, 25. "People were being killed and beheaded. By the time we arrived, we were exhausted. My children were very unwell and had lost a lot of weight."**

In 2017, Mulumbwa, her husband and their two children left all they had in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to seek refuge in Zambia. They journeyed on foot for two weeks to reach the border. Now they are among 17,200 refugees living in the Mantapala settlement in the northern province of Luapula in Zambia – 60 percent of whom are children.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is at hand, providing monthly cash grants to 90 percent of the residents. Until last year, WFP provided all refugees with a monthly food basket consisting of

fortified maize meal, specialized nutritious food, beans, fortified oil and iodized salt. The cash, however, allows families to buy the food of their choice in local markets.

"The specialized nutritious food helped my children to recover," says Mulumbwa. "But we had to travel to the nearest town on bicycles to sell some of that food [in order] to buy other food items like fish that we did not receive."

Her family's favourite meal is chicken and nshima – a staple dish of maize, flour and water. The cash assistance also empowers Mulumbwa to do business. "I formed a savings group with four other refugees," she says. "I started to save 50 kwachas [US\$2.75] every time we received a payout. After a few months, I used my savings to set up a business buying and reselling fish, cooking oil, tomatoes and onions at the market."

She adds: "The business has really helped me. I can now afford to buy soap. I can also buy and feed my family with foods like fish."

Meanwhile, Elvis Chiwafwa, head of WFP's field office in Nchelenge is worried about rising food prices. WFP keeps a close eye on the market, he says. "At the start of the year, a litre of cooking oil went for around 20 kwacha," he adds. "Today, it sells for around 40-50 kwacha. Because of the speed [at which] prices are rising, we are conducting market assessments every six months to inform the cash value given to the refugees."

Most of the refugees here have fled political and ethnic violence that broke out in the run-up to the 2018 elections in DRC. People who have been here longer run small shops that sell food and handmade clothes. They've built homes, settled into their community and made new friends.

Naomi, a 22-year-old single mother, came to Zambia at the end of 2020 with her elderly mother and three young children. Her smile quickly disappears when she describes her journey and the impact it had on her family: "We left by foot for Zambia." Almost a week later, they reached the border. "We were pleased when we arrived, but my children were very sick. Life's been really hard for them," she says.

For Naomi, cash assistance means that she can feed her children and dedicate a part of it to buy medicines.

"I've been using the cash assistance to buy maize grain, cooking oil, salt, Chinese cabbage, cassava and fish. I've also been buying some medicine to help my children when they aren't available in the clinic in the settlement," says Naomi.

"Without the cash assistance, my children and I would die of hunger."

She hopes that her children will continue to get better and that WFP's life-saving support will continue until they have found a sense of normality in Zambia.

**WFP's refugee response in Mantapala Refugee Settlement is supported by generous donations received from the US and Germany**



# PICTURE FOCUS



A health worker examines a child at a refugee camp as part of a joint effort by UNHCR, the Population Refugees and Migration Bureau and the US Embassy in Zambia.



# Zambia makes a rallying call to prioritize SRHR for all people

The Government of Zambia in partnership with UNFPA co-hosted a joint event to commemorate the World Population Day and launch of the 2021 State of World Population Report. The theme for this year's world population day is "Rights and Choices are the Answer: Whether baby boom or bust, the solution lies in prioritizing the reproductive health and rights of all people"; while the theme for the 2021 State of World Population Report is; "My Body is my own: Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination."

Zambia like many other countries continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic which has taken a huge toll on communities and systems for delivery of social services. Notably, the pandemic has continued to pause significant risks to the sustained provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services. Further, as the country prioritizes the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the reallocation of resources away from the SRH services could take a toll on the health of women and girls. The pandemic has also exacerbated gender inequalities and gender-based violence, with increased incidence of violence during implementation of the Covid-19 restrictive preventive measures. Coupled with all this, there are further anecdotal indications that maternal deaths, child marriage and adolescent pregnancies have increased, as programmes to address these challenges have been interrupted.

Therefore, the event, which was held virtually and broadcasted live through national television and digital platforms,



underscored the urgency for various stakeholders to prioritize investment in sexual reproductive health information and services especially in light of the disruptions in health service delivery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the event, both the Government of Zambia (represented by the Ministries of National Development Planning, Health and Gender) and UNFPA reaffirmed their continued commitment to safeguard the sexual, reproductive health and rights of all people especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to ensure that women and girls are empowered to make their own decisions about their bodies and are free from all forms of violation. They further made a rallying call on all stakeholders to join in and collectively make this a reality for Zambia.

"Zambia along with many other countries recognizes that sexual reproductive health rights are important and therefore continues to place a high premium on upholding these rights. This is because of the intricate link that exists between women's sexual reproductive health and women being empowered economically as well as having good health for themselves and their families." - Mr. Chola Chabala, Permanent Secretary – Ministry of National Development Planning. "Upholding the right to bodily autonomy for all is crucial for achieving gender equity and equality in the development process." - Dr. Sastone Silomba, Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Gender

"As you may be aware, the fertility rate for Zambia stands at 4.7 births per woman. These and other population dynamics call upon us a country to reposition ourselves well so that we are able to provide timely, appropriate and quality reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services to our people." - Dr. Kennedy Malama, Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Health

"We call on all stakeholders to redouble our efforts in prioritizing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all as a matter of urgency. To achieve this effectively, health systems and communities should be supported to deliver sexual and reproductive health services during crises- including by classifying this work as essential." - Ms. Gift Malunga, Country Representative – UNFPA Zambia



# Zambia continues to receive COVID-19 vaccines

The arrival of increased supplies of life-saving COVID-19 vaccines to Zambia stepped up in the third quarter of 2021, thanks in part to global advocacy for richer countries to share supplies.

On 5 July, Zambia received a donation of 228,000 vaccines donated by the French government through the COVAX Facility, followed by two donations from the United States in the second half of July totalling 302,400, and a donation of 119,200 doses from the UK in early August. All these doses were delivered through the COVAX Facility, a global partnership between CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO. 100,000 doses donated by China and the first arrivals under the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) initiative, an AU initiative supported by several partners including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

"These deliveries really come at the most important time for Zambia to continue the momentum of the vaccination campaign," said the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Dr Coumba Mar Gadio. "And we hope to see even more Zambian fellow citizens benefit from these additional vaccines."

As of 13 September 2021, a total of 309,701 people were fully vaccinated, while 311,763 first doses of two-dose vaccine treatments have been given.

Although by September the third wave of COVID-19 infections and deaths in Zambia seemed to be waning, the Ministry of Health is



warning of a possible fourth wave towards the end of the year and continues to encourage following the 'five golden rules' for COVID-19 protection, plus widespread adult vaccination. Currently, less than 4 per cent of the targeted adult population are fully vaccinated.

The United Nations has been leading several initiatives to encourage greater vaccine take-up under the COVID-19 advocacy, communication and social mobilisation strategy, launched by the Ministry of Health in May.

The United Nations Communications Group is working with the Lusaka Health Office on community engagement work in and around Lusaka. While a partnership between UNICEF and the Zambia Red Cross Society and also WaterAid will promote community engagement around COVID-19 in ten high-priority districts.

The value of fellow Zambians encouraging each other is a key part of measures to reassure those who may be worried about

vaccine side effects. "Please take time to come and get your vaccine," says Josephine Lubasi Mainza in Lusaka. "I just got mine, it's not painful. It is very important that you get your vaccine."

"Let's protect each other - it's the responsible thing to do," said another woman, Chanda Kasanda, at a vaccination site in Lusaka. "I encourage everyone to come and get the vaccine."



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