Partnerships to Make SDGs Reality for All

Youth Development · Ending AIDS · Human Rights · Resilience
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Note from the UN Resident Coordinator

Finally, the rains have given a sign of renewed hope. This may be true, but for 5.2 million Zimbabweans the impact of the El Nino-induced two years of drought still lingers in rural areas and its ramifications have been noticed with increased urban vulnerability coupled with the prevailing economic challenges.

It was heartening for me to witness firsthand during my field mission how communities from Binga in Matabeleland North to Chiredzi as far as Gonarezhou settlement in Masvingo province working hard to make a living amidst severe drought. Communities had to plant and replant three times with different grains hopping to get something out of their fields. Unfortunately, the harsh weather condition, the worst drought since 1992, didn’t relent.

Despite grim situation, it was comforting to note that the affected communities, particularly women were taking the fight to regain their livelihood and dignity by saving one or two dollars. They were saving from the cash transfer they received as part of the ongoing drought relief assistance, under the Humanitarian Response Plan, to prepare their land, buy seed and other farming input to get ready for the upcoming rainy season.

In our collective response to the prevailing drought situation, under the leadership of the Government, jointly the UN and NGOs, with the generous support of the development partners such as the USA, UK, China, EU, Netherlands, Japan – to name but a few - have demonstrated strong solidarity in alleviating hunger.

Of the total US$352 million appeal made for the period April 2016 to March 2017, some US$212 million has been committed enabling the UN and NGOs to reach 1.7 million people who are most in need. The response is expected to reach 3.1 million people at the peak of the lean season. Our assistance is targeted to the most vulnerable communities in line with the universal humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

While responding to the prevailing humanitarian situation, our overall strategy is to counter and mitigate the effects of climate change by tackling its root causes through resilience building, agricultural reform, irrigation, water harvesting and management for longer term impact, and by working towards the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continued.

Assuch, in support of the national efforts, the UN has been supporting implementation of the SDGs under the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) and establishing a broad-based national advocacy to raise awareness on the global goals. In this regard, the Parliamentarians; Local Government (Provincial and District Level); Young people in schools, in universities, and in their associations; traditional leaders; and the media have come together to advance the achievement of the SDGs. Meanwhile, Government efforts with reforms must continue, particularly to attract investment and the engagement of the private sector, one of the key pillars for the achievement of SDGs.

We definitely need to increase the momentum on our commitment to end poverty, hunger and fulfilling the aspirations of SDG 16 – ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions for all. To make good on our commitment to the global goals, implementation of national development programmes is key. In line with the forgoing, I am pleased to note that the UN programme delivery until the end of September 2016 stands at US$310 million, this is well on track on the first year plan of the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF.

This 16th edition of the UN in Zimbabwe newsletter is dedicated to highlight partnerships created to advance SDGs, showcase UN programme support in the areas of human rights, HIV/AIDS; youth skills development; resilience building; food and nutrition security; multi-sectoral drought response. Wishing you a nice read.
Making SDGs a reality for all in Zimbabwe

The Government together with United Nations System, development partners, civil society organizations, national associations, the media and community leaders and members reiterated their commitment for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Zimbabwe.

Addressing over 300 representatives from Government, Diplomatic Corps, NGOs, private sectors, community leaders and the media at the 71st Anniversary of the United Nations celebrations held at the World Health Organization (WHO) office grounds on Monday 24 October 2016, Bishow Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator paid tribute to the multi-sectoral engagement in making the attainment of SDGs a reality in Zimbabwe.

"On this special day [UN Day], we take stock of a year-long engagement in the development and humanitarian spheres in Zimbabwe. It is a culmination of a series of advocacy activities that has run throughout 2016: ranging from awareness raising around the core values and principles of the UN Charter, to building a national coalition for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and its 17 goals," Parajuli said.

During the course of 2016, under the overall leadership of the Office of the President and Cabinet with technical support from the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, a broad-based national coalition of SDGs has been established. The Parliamentarians have taken the lead in legislating for SDGs-friendly laws; and local government (provincial and district level) have committed to actively participate in the implementation of SDGs programmes on the ground.

Young people in schools, in universities and in their associations have been playing their role in SDGs advocacy online and off-line, whilst on the other hand traditional leaders have started mobilizing communities into action. The media has for long been on board setting the agenda of public discourse for a meaningful and objective dialogue on SDGs.

The UN Resident Coordinator noted on the need to increase the momentum on the commitment that “no one is left behind” in the quest to end poverty, hunger and protect the planet, as well as fulfilling the aspirations of SDG 16 – ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions for all.

In line with this commitment, in the first year of the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) implementation, the UN has been on target in development programme support, except some areas such as poverty reduction that require additional resources. Recognizing this challenge, the Government has recently launched its

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UN programme support for 2016 stands at $310 million as at end of September 2016, well on track on the first year plan of the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy for the period of 2016-2018 that will guide national efforts to reduce poverty. It is important that this is implemented in full force.

The ZUNDAF prioritizes the UN’s support in areas of food and nutrition security; gender equality; HIV & AIDS; poverty reduction and value addition; public administration and governance; and social services and protection. For example, in partnership with the development partners and the Global Funds, the programme on HIV and AIDS is currently providing treatment to 915,000 Zimbabweans, resulting in steady reduction of prevalence rate. The programme on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health helped Zimbabwe to reduce the maternal mortality by 50% in the last 5 years.

The UN continues to support the advancement of human rights and rule of law, including through the Universal Periodic Review process and capacitating independent national bodies, which include: the Human Rights Commission; Gender Commission; National healing, Peace and Reconciliation Commission; and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

In a speech read on his behalf by Information, Media and Broadcast Services Minister Chris Mushohwe, at celebrations to mark the 71st anniversary of the UN, Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa revealed that government has been working with support from UN and other development partners to lay the ground to achieve the targets set in the SDGs as well as aligning them to the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset).

“As government, we are enthused that the implementation of these sustainable goals has brought about a unique experience through working with the United Nations. Added to that, we are working hand in pocket with the world governing body in the implementation of our economic blueprint, the Zim Asset, so that we achieve and attain Agenda 2030,” Mnangagwa said.

He added that, in line with the SDGs’ theme of leaving no one behind, government is urging the participation of everyone, especially the vulnerable and marginalized groups, so as make the goals a reality.

VP Mnangagwa said, “Food is central to the wellbeing of all human beings, hence it should be prioritized. Constitutionally, everyone has a right to clean food and water thus we have adopted the Command Agriculture program, which will bring in the long run, sustainable food production for the people.

Representing the young people at the UN Day Annah Matsika, from a youth platform called theSpace said, “Through our partnership with the United Nations, theSpace convened a Training of Trainers on SDGs for 120 Young Leaders from across Zimbabwe. The Jameson Hotel (where the training was convened) declaration pledged that each young person should participate in leading and framing the society we want to see by 2030.”

The UN supported training of trainers on SDGs for young people has since allowed many young people to mobilize themselves in their different communities and taking up initiatives towards achieving the SDGs.

The 120 youth leaders who made a pledge on achieving SDGs placed at the core of their strategy embracing new technologies, approaches and addressing complex issues with simple answers as a better way for achieving the goals.
Legislators Embrace Sustainable Development Goals

As part of rolling out advocacy on SDGs, a multi-stakeholder dialogue was held with Parliamentarians in Harare in May 2016.

The dialogue, which involved 180 Members of Parliament, the Office of the President and Cabinet, the United Nations and Development Partners, underlined those legislators as representatives of the people have the mandate to mobilize constituencies and to ensure the allocation of budget to attain the 17 SDGs by 2030.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Jacob Mudenda said that legislators would work with all key stakeholders including the UN family in ensuring the successful rollout and achievement of the SDGs.

To effectively roll-out the SDGs in Zimbabwe, the Speaker emphasized, “As parliamentarians we possess the power to set the tone for robust public discourse on the SDGs with focus on goals and results”. Noting the need to focus on domestic and foreign resource mobilization to fulfil the commitment on the SDGs, the Speaker said, “It is the responsibility of the Parliamentarians to scrutinize the policies and operations of government departments towards the SDGs and reviewing international agreements to assess their conformity with Zimbabwe’s performance.”

Meanwhile Senate President Hon. Edna Madzongwe said a proactive response to the SDGs was in tandem with Parliament’s institutional strategic plan of 2014 to 2018 to enhance equity and contributions from Parliament in the national development agenda.

“The focus on the 17 SDGs is on delivery of basic human rights, food and nutrition, improved health and education, clean water and sanitation, as well as affordable clean energy, and as representatives of the people MPs need to press for prompt and concerted action on SDGs from the Executive,” she said. Madzongwe also suggested that MPs promote attainment of SDGs through critically examining Bills brought before Parliament to ensure they conformed to the SDG agenda, and through reviewing international treaties and conventions to assess their commitment to the global goals.

United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative to Zimbabwe, Bishow Parajuli urged MPs to take an active role in driving the SDGs which were adopted at the UN General Assembly last year. “The SDGs are a global commitment to “take bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable resilient path,” and in so doing ensure that “no one will be left behind.”

Given the broadness and inter-linkages of the SDGs, the new global agenda will require a collective and an integrated approach to address the various challenges. Parajuli said that legislators play a central role in formulating relevant laws to facilitate pro-poor growth or budgetary allocations to prioritized sectors.

Given the emerging development landscape, the delivery on the SDGs rests on a tripartite global partnership: the governments, private sector, and development partners. But the fundamental responsibility for this global partnership lies with governments. This responsibility is multitude and challenging but within reach as the means and know-how to achieve the SDGs is abundant.

Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Misheck Sibanda noted that MPs, the youth and government departments should collectively bring SDGs to the people. He said government will implement all SDGs with emphasis placed on 10 goals most critical for Zimbabwe’s sustainable development.

In his address to the parliamentarians, former Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe H.E. Lars Ronnas said, “Sweden will continue to assist Zimbabwe through our common platform, the United Nations, to achieve the SDGs.”

Meanwhile Macro-Economic Development Ministry Secretary, Desire Sibanda said, “The African continent participated more on the formulation of the SDGs than the MDGs, and when the SDGs are being implemented they become an African and Zimbabwean document.” Sibanda said there was need for political will at the highest level in the implementation of SDGs, including commitment by MPs.

The two-day dialogue ended with participants resolving to set-up a Parliamentary Committee on SDGs, to take the SDGs to their respective constituency and for the UN to provide a seminar on its engagement in Zimbabwe and on the SDGs.

10 SDGs Zimbabwe prioritized for implementation

(I-r) UN Resident Coordinator Bishow Parajuli and Speaker of National Assembly, Hon. Advocate Jacob Mudenda together with over 180 parliamentarians pledging to work for the achievement of the SDGs in Zimbabwe

Former Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe H.E Lars Ronnas reiterating Sweden's commitment to SDGs

10 SDGs Zimbabwe prioritized for implementation
Mobilising Youth for Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which compose the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have set the global community on a collective journey towards a “world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive.”

Given that the 2030 Agenda will significantly shape global, national and local development efforts for the next 15 years as well as the agenda’s guiding principle to leave no one behind, youth involvement will be required to successfully implement and sustain efforts to meet the SDGs.

In recognition that youth must play a central role in the 2030 Agenda, the UN in Zimbabwe in collaboration with the Zimbabwe United Nations Association (ZUNA) has launched the SDGs Lecture Series in Universities as part of its youth component to engage students across the country as key stakeholders and future leaders to advance on the achievement of the SDGs.

The purpose of the series is to raise awareness and to encourage active engagement by providing the opportunity for students and the local academic community to engage with the UN or experts on SDGs of particular relevance to their respective universities and to Zimbabwe at large.

To date, the lecture series has reached some 3,000 students and staff in different Universities. One of the UN staff members who gave a lecture to some 300 students at Bindura University, Ms. Yvette Kabazo, from UNESCO said, “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals must be championed not only by the academics but also by all segments of society as they are conceived from the desire to live in a world free from fear and want, and shared amongst the countries and peoples of the world.” In her lecture, Ms. Kabazo highlighted that the 17 SDGs are interlinked and reinforce each other, and SDG 4 which focuses on quality education is crucial for progress across all other goals.

Noting that UNESCO’s continued role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, Ms. Kabazo said, “UNESCO is working with the Government of Zimbabwe on a National Consultation to set-up implementation modalities for the achievement of SDG 4.”

Students who participated in the lecture series offered both constructive debate and the desire to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the SDGs.

Meanwhile students from the International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF) convened a week long congress at the University of Zimbabwe and pledged to play their part in the efforts to achieve the SDGs.

2016 Model United Nations Debates Climate Change

United Nations in Zimbabwe jointly with Zimbabwe United Nations Association (ZUNA) facilitated Model United Nations for 2,800 high school students from over 70 schools across the country.

The students debated on the topic Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change, addressing SDG 13.

Addressing student delegates, ILO Country Director, Hopolang Phororo said, “You, the young people, are the SDGs generation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is your agenda, it is about your future. Today is your opportunity to voice your concerns, to address the key challenges that matter to your generation and to share your ideas on what you can do to build a better world.”

Minister of Education, Lazarus Dokora said, “If we [Zimbabweans] are going to change climate change, we need collaboration at a local, national and global level.”

Student delegates, assisted by their teachers and classmates, represented United Nations member states in pairs. “This is my first Model UN, it really feels like you are a real ambassador, I am excited to get started,” says Martha Gwinti, participant representing Kenya at this year’s Model United Nations.

The Model United Nations is an advocacy programme aiming to impact the values and work of the UN system to students and the general public.

The students identified education to communities and innovation in creating access to medicines for all as two key areas they could make a difference in. They also highlighted political will and localizing the SDGs to country contexts as other factors that would enable realizing the SDGs.
Investment in youth with appropriate skills education and training for value addition, beneficiation and job creation is an investment in the future of Zimbabwe. Under the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF, UN agencies are working together to support Zimbabwe realise SDG 8.

The International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme is one such example.

During a briefing organised to share the findings of the review of the programme, ILO Director Hopolang Phororo said, “The six-year programme, funded by the Danish Government, promoted local economic development through creation of new economic and employment opportunities in 32 rural districts in Zimbabwe.”

Phororo stated that a key determinant to the success of the program was the adoption of Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology. TREE methodology is a community-based technical and vocational skills development focusing on agriculture and rural development, including value chain development, skills upgrading and projects targeting out-of-school youth.

Through the TREE methodology, lives of 5,457 youth – aged between 18 and 32 – were transformed, which included 2,710 people who were able to access micro-finance and/or training opportunities to expand their businesses.

The number of programme participants in rural areas who own a business increased by 34%, and the average increase in annual income was US$819 for programme participants. “We wanted them to own the programme, gain business management skills and know how to borrow from micro-finance institutions to grow their business,” Phororo told the audience.

Despite certain challenges such as biased gender roles and low expectations toward social programmes, the programme demonstrated successful outcomes for the rural community. “This programme illustrates how real change has taken place where it is needed most - for the benefit of young women and men,” said Phororo.

In going forward, through the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe United Nations Development Framework, the United Nations in Zimbabwe will continue to prioritize efforts to increase access to income and decent work opportunities, particularly for young people and women.

Meanwhile, UNDP has scaled up the Young Farmers Innovation Lab following a successful completion of a pilot project that was implemented from January to August 2016. The project, which is designed to foster collaborative entrepreneurship among young farmers and to transform farming practices in commercially viable agri-business ventures, targeted 100 young people farming in Honde Valley, Murehwa, Harare peri-urban and Chimanimani with business development skills and ICT competencies.

The first phase saw the farmers successfully develop a brand of sustainable farming produce that was marketed and sold in leading retail supermarkets. Some of the products marketed include poultry meat, fresh tomatoes and dried fruits. The second phase seeks to expand the collaborative programme to more young farmers in additional districts across the country.

The young farmers innovation lab brings together UNDP, Zimbabwe Farmers Union, Harare Institute of Technology, Watershed College, Oxfam, Barclays Zimbabwe and German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) among others, all seeking to leverage their areas of comparative strength to jointly support young farmers within this pilot.
Ending AIDS by 2030 in Zimbabwe

In the past decade and a half, Zimbabwe has halved the size of its HIV epidemic, but still remains the 5th worst affected country in the world. The country is determined to end AIDS for good, and in early November significant steps were taken to raise the resources needed.

President Mugabe announced a pledge of US$1 Million to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to the global replenishment conference held in Montreal, Canada in November. In announcing the pledge, the President said the Global Fund has contributed significantly towards the reduction of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, and the investment in HIV together with Zimbabwe’s own innovative initiative, the National AIDS Trust Fund, has saved millions of lives in Zimbabwe.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Embassy of Canada in Zimbabwe convened a multi-stakeholder dialogue on ending AIDS in the country, in Harare. The lively meeting brought together government, UN, development partners, and civil society.

The Ambassador of Canada to Zimbabwe, H.E Kumar Gupta said the Global Fund has made a significant investment to end AIDS, malaria and TB in Zimbabwe, and that investment needs to continue. He added “I am pleased that my government hosted the replenishment conference of the Global Fund as well as increasing by 20% its allocation to the Fund.”


United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Zimbabwe, Bishow Parajuli committed the UN system to continue to support Zimbabwe’s efforts against AIDS, noting that even with the progress made “that job needs to continue until the end is in sight.”

Speaking at the event, Deputy Minister for Health and Child Care Mr Aldrin Musiiwa acknowledged the support provided by the Global Fund in combatting AIDS, TB and malaria. He said the defining model of the Fund was a true partnership between governments from the south and north, but also the private sector and communities. He said that “partnership, sustainability, mutual respect and dignity are the hallmarks of good international practice” and are integral to both the way the Fund works and to the Sustainable Development Goals – including its targets to end AIDS, TB and malaria by 2030.

The event in Zimbabwe honoured Ms Martha Tholanah who in July was awarded the Elizabeth Taylor Human Rights Award at the International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa. “Ending AIDS means leaving no one behind,” Ms Tholanah said. “We must measure the success of our AIDS response by how well the most vulnerable are empowered to take control over their own health and sexual rights.”

Michael Bartos, UNAIDS Country Director in Zimbabwe, praised the strength of Zimbabwe’s partnership between government, civil society and international partners in the AIDS, malaria and TB response. He noted that the Global Fund invests in Zimbabwe “because it knows that this is a country in which it gets results.”

Zimbabwean activist and Global Fund Youth Advocate Loyce Maturu attended the Global Fund 5th Replenishment in Canada and joined the Harare support event by video link. Loyce’s own life story has been powerful testimony in support of the Global Fund. She told global audiences how she lost her own mother and sole sibling, who succumbed to AIDS and Tuberculosis in the same week: “had the Global Fund been in Zimbabwe earlier, my mother and my younger brother would be alive today and I wouldn’t have gone through many challenges,” Loyce said.

The 5th Replenishment conference in Montreal raised US$ 12.9 billion for the Global Fund for its grant cycle from 2017–2019. These pledges will allow the Fund to continue to support Zimbabwe to ending AIDS by 2030. Harare’s event in the lead up to the replenishment was a powerful reminder of what is at stake, and why global solidarity is so important for millions of Zimbabweans.
Zimbabwe’s 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights took place on 2 November 2016 in Geneva. Of the 260 recommendations received from Member States of the UN Human Rights Council, Zimbabwe accepted 142 and deferred 100, and 18 recommendations were noted. Zimbabwe will give its final position on the recommendations in March 2017 when the UPR report is deliberated by the UN Human Rights Council.

The recommendations were made by 86 Member States following an interactive dialogue. Key on the list were recommendations to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, alignment of laws to the Constitution, ensuring freedoms of expression association and assembly, abolition of death penalty, cooperation with human rights mechanisms and ending child marriages.

Leading Zimbabwe’s delegates at the review, Vice President, Hon. Emmerson Mnangagwa, who is also the Minister of Justice said, “The non-abolishment of the death penalty was a response to the outcomes of the peoples’ wishes expressed during the Constitution making process.” The Vice President stated that most of the provisions of Convention against Torture were already incorporated in Zimbabwe domestic laws.

Vice President Mnangagwa also clarified that while 90 persons are on death penalty there has been no execution for the last 10 years. So far 10 clemency petitions had been heard by Cabinet and all have been approved.

He also outlined efforts on alignment of laws noting that several pieces of legislation have been aligned including abolition of child marriage while a number of new laws have been promulgated to operationalize commissions such as the Gender Commission. He also noted that the enabling legislation for the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission would be placed before the current session of Parliament.

He advised that Independent Commissions are now getting independent budget votes while stating that Zimbabwe Election Commission is independent in its operations. Under the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework, the UN system in Zimbabwe supports the promotion of human rights, with focus on capacity development of the independent commissions, namely Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Zimbabwe Gender Commission, and National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

The Vice President said that politicization of food assistance in the ongoing drought response efforts was not Government’s policy and stringent and punitive measures are in place to deal with cases of abuse.

Member States commended Zimbabwe for the establishment of the UPR Steering Committee and its National Plan of Action 2012-2015 was applauded as good practice.

The UN in Zimbabwe Human Rights Working Group, led by UNDP, supported national consultation on the UPR process. UNDP also provided financial and technical support for the Zimbabwe to participate at the 26th session of the UPR in Geneva.

The UPR is a mechanism that was established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2006. It is a peer country to country review mechanism of the overall human rights situation of the UN member states. Zimbabwe first participated in the UPR process in 2011 and accepted and implemented various recommendations in the outcome report.
Cash Transfer Saves Lives, Bridges Tech Divide

“The cash transfer undertaken through Ecocash to assist the drought affected communities with emergency relief assistance, as well as irrigation schemes, saving and lending schemes in the district are not only saving lives but also transforming the livelihoods of the communities and giving long lasting connectivity among far to reach rural households bolstering access to information and mobile banking”, Bishow Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator has said while addressing journalists after a three-day-long field mission to rural wards in Chiredzi District.

“These efforts have to be scaled up to reach more people in need and I would like to commend donors for their support”, added the UN Resident Coordinator.

Of the $352 million being sought under the Humanitarian Response Plan (April 2016-March 2017), nearly $212 million has been committed, with the current funding gap at $140 million. The committed financial and in kind relief support has allowed the UN and NGOs to reach approximately 2 million vulnerable people in over 45 districts with food, cash, agricultural inputs and other lifesaving relief assistance.

The total committed resource to the humanitarian response includes the recently announced additional £40 million by DFID. Announcing the additional boost which brings the total contribution by the Government of the UK to £55.6 million, Annabel Gerry Head of DFID Zimbabwe said, “The additional support from DFID will provide mobile cash payments to 360,000 vulnerable people up until end of March 2017; cover the cost of screening of 160,000 children for malnutrition and the cost of treatment for over 12,000 children.”

The ongoing relief response has been made possible by the generous financial and in-kind contributions from USAID, DFID, EU-ECHO, the Netherlands, Japan, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Ireland and Denmark. The BRICS nations and others have also supported the relief efforts, including bilateral contributions from China, India and Brazil.

To enhance provincial and national relief coordination through reciprocal and timely information sharing to ensure accountability and maximize the impact of the ongoing drought response efforts, the Office of the President and Cabinet, and the UN System in Zimbabwe organized a series of field visits to drought affected areas, and convened two major local level (covering all provinces) and four national level multi-stakeholders meeting. The meetings brought together over 600 representatives who have been directly involved in the relief efforts representing Government, UN, humanitarian and development partners, local administrators, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, community representatives, and the media.

In all the consultative meetings participants called for the ongoing school feeding programme to cover all school-going children; POTRAZ to increase connectivity to ensure smooth running of the cash transfer programmes; and relief assistance to consistently adhere to principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality where any and all who are in need are targeted for humanitarian assistance irrespective of their political and other affiliation.

Stephanie Funk, USAID Mission Director welcomed the calls made by all stakeholders and said “We support the UN principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. We consider these principles necessary to making sure that our assistance is delivered in an accountable and transparent way, regardless of political affiliation, religion or gender.” She emphasized that “the El Niño induced drought is bigger than all of us, we must continue to work together to make our efforts as effective as possible.”

Senior Principal Director, Office of the President and Cabinet, Mr. O. E. M. Hove said, “Government has made all efforts to import and set aside a buffer stock of maize to ensure that no citizen starves irrespective of one’s political or other affiliations.” Mr. Hove appreciated the generous support from humanitarian and development partners that are complementing Government’s efforts in response to the prevailing humanitarian challenges and called on all partners to stay the course.

Reiterating on the call to planning for the future with focus on building resilience, Mr. Hove said, “to this end the Government of Zimbabwe is implementing a special programme to ensure food security targeting to produce at least two million metric tonnes of maize grain on 400,000ha of which 200,000ha will be irrigated.”

The ongoing humanitarian response is linked to recovery, resilience building and medium term development. The UN System together with development partners is supporting national efforts through the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
El Nino’s Effects Linger in Rural, Increases Urban Vulnerability

Zimbabwe is in the midst of the worst drought since 1992 that is projected to affect 5.2 million people during the first quarter of 2017.

To mitigate the situation a comprehensive and multi-sectoral Humanitarian Response Plan (April 2016 – March 2017) was put in place calling for international assistance of US$352 million to address the emergency needs of 3.1 million most vulnerable people, with almost half of them children.

Nearly US$212 million has been committed, enabling the UN and NGOs to provide support to 2 million people. This support includes generous contributions from USAID, DFID, ECHO, the Netherlands, Japan, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Ireland and Denmark. BRICS nations and others have also supported the drought response, including direct in-kind contributions from China, India and Brazil. It is critical for the remaining gap of $140 million to be mobilized, particularly for the under-funded sectors of WASH, Nutrition, education and Protection.

UNICEF says out of US$21.8 million required to support humanitarian response that targeted most affected children in Zimbabwe; so far only US$17 million has been secured leaving a gap of US$4.8 million.

Matabeleland South is the country’s third poorest province and had the highest proportion of households taking care of children under foster care arrangements. It also had the highest proportion of households depending on foreign remittances for survival at 24% and the highest proportion of income spent on food at 65%, indicating the increased levels of poverty.

The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of children aged between six and 59 months at 5.7 % was the highest recorded in 15 years, according to the ZIMVAC report. This has led to increased dropout from school and lack of concentration in classes.

The school meals that have been introduced are making a difference by helping improve concentration and attendance levels but need to be scaled up. Parents not having paid in the first and second terms versus 90 % who paid last year.

Water shortages were also threatening the school after its borehole dried up, withering its vegetable gardening project, Dube said. “The sanitary situation is also in bad shape,” she said. “We can’t even afford to clean the toilets.”

Teachers are being forced to buy water, which is fetched from the riverbed, about three kilometers from the school, she said.

Phineas Maphosa, a councillor whose ward includes the school, said this was the worst drought ever. “The situation here is desperate,” said Maphosa, who had organized a meeting of village elders as a UNICEF team visited. “We are grateful for the assistance from Government, UN and NGOs but it’s not enough. People have lost everything here.”

Michael Mpondo, a local farmer, said he was surviving largely because of his children in South Africa. He says he harvested three 50-kilogramme bags of maize and nothing from his groundnut crop. He has sold most of his goats already, he said.

This extremely tough humanitarian situation calls for an urgent response to fill the gap of $140 million under the Humanitarian Response Plan, particularly as the response aims to increase the assistance from 1.7m to 3.1 million in the first quarter of 2017.

“Inadequate funding to the response will not only curtail the chance of increasing our assistance to the most needy but also risk in reversing the gains made, thus far, in the development and humanitarian response efforts,” said the UN Resident Coordinator, Bishow Parajuli.

SDG 13 targets to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters
Building Resilience Towards Zero Hunger

Building resilience before, during and after disasters is a pre-requisite for the UN to contribute to achieving food security and adequate nutrition for all Zimbabweans by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Recurrent climate-related disasters, exacerbated by one of the most devastating droughts in recent history, are among the main drivers of food insecurity in Zimbabwe.

According to recent ZimVAC findings, an estimated 5.2 million people will be food insecure during the peak of the hunger period (January to March 2017). Through its Productive Asset Creation (PAC) programme, WFP is implementing a two-fold approach to help people meet immediate food needs while also building their resilience to future shocks over time through infrastructure projects, so that food and nutrition security is no longer an elusive goal.

While the El Niño-induced drought had left most Zimbabweans wishing for rain, communities in the dry southern district of Hwange have managed to harvest sunlight to access water. Through the programme, Mabale village has seen livelihoods transformed with the use of solar technology to source water troughs, a dip tank for cattle, and a community garden.

Dominique Dingane, a 58-year-old villager in Mabale, was among the many impacted by the irregular rainfall this year.

“The sun that has scorched other people’s fields because of El Niño is the same sun that these solar panels converted to pump water,” says Dominic. “This allows us to water our crops, supply the cattle water troughs and also supply the dip tank.”

Along with the installation of the solar-powered pump, the dip tank and water troughs in Mabale were rehabilitated by the local community as part of the programme in 2015, in partnership with World Vision International. For six-months, participants received food assistance from WFP as they worked on the assets, which now continue to service the surrounding villages. The dip tank prevents tick-borne diseases in cattle, protecting more than 2,000 herds of cattle owned by 600 households.

Besides boosting the livelihoods of those dependent on livestock, the solar-pumped water system has made it possible for a community garden to flourish nearby. The community decided to create a vegetable garden in 2015 as one of the projects under the programme. Previously, villagers had to travel long distances to access nutritious produce. The solar water pump now sustains the garden benefitting 32 households, each with their own plot to grow different varieties of vegetables.

WFP, through SDG 2, two aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. It acknowledges that eradicating hunger means ensuring access to nutritious food for the most vulnerable, increasing agricultural production through sustainable and resilient food systems and tackling the multi-dimensional causes of malnutrition.

“This type of innovative technology supported by WFP has improved my family welfare,” says Dominic. “We now have vegetables to eat and to sell the surplus.”

The projects in Mabale were made possible through the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID has been the largest donor to the Productive Asset Creation programme since its inception, and continues to be the biggest donor to WFP’s El Niño drought response in Zimbabwe. Its contribution of more than US$60 million to WFP since the start of the drought has ensured timely emergency relief to those most affected, whilst enhancing the resilience of communities like Mabale to achieve self-reliance amidst challenging circumstances.

“Addressing both the root causes and consequences of hunger is critical to long-term food security and sustainable development. WFP supports people beyond their immediate needs, helping them build a better future where even the most vulnerable can thrive under a changing climate,” says WFP Zimbabwe Country Director, Eddie Rowe.