I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our national and international partners for welcoming me to Zimbabwe.

Since I assumed office as UN Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe in September 2014, I have had the privilege to witness first-hand the commitment and strong partnership between the Government, the UN, Donors, NGOs and the Private Sector. Thanks to this strong collaboration, the UN is well underway to define its framework of engagement for the 2016-2020 period through the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF).

In going forward, the UN will focus on supporting the Government of Zimbabwe, in collaboration with Development Partners to ensure the implementation of the ZUNDAF in a coherent manner, where possible through joint programming as well as joint communications, advocacy and resource mobilisation.

The ultimate objective of the United Nations in Zimbabwe is to strengthen national capacity and human capital to plan, implement and achieve sustainable development results.

This is what the United Nations contributions should be measured against.

I look forward for a continued collaboration.

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Zim Organic Farmers Win Global Recognition

In a ceremony featuring the UN Development Group Chair and UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, and former United States of America Vice President Al Gore, Zimbabwe’s Makoni Organic Farmers Association (MOFA) received the coveted Equator Prize 2014.

The event, held in New York on 22 September 2014 was in honour of a group of 25 outstanding local and indigenous community initiatives that are leading examples of sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities across the planet.

The Equator Prize “recognizes outstanding local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities.” In 2014, the Initiative received a record-setting 1,234 nominations from 121 countries around the world.

Some members of the Makoni Organic Farmers Association tend to their crop.
The award comes with a cash incentive of USD 5,000.

“The Makoni farmers have been able to demonstrate how small grants can make a big impact in enhancing development” explained the Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme (GEFSGP) National Coordinator Ms. Tsitsi Wutawunashe.

Supported by the GEFSGP of UNDP, the Makoni Farmers Association (MOFA), currently comprising 450 members, was established as a community development organization in Makoni area, located about 170 kilometres east of Harare. Thanks to the Organic Network Forum, a local NGO, the farmers received training on organic farming, a development that has significantly transformed their livelihoods.

With assistance from UNDP, the Makoni Farmers Association complemented the small grant programme funding through co-financing by providing locally available materials and labour to the tune of USD 37,060.

The Association integrates principles of sustainable land management, gender mainstreaming and food security. It has enhanced community resilience through diversified agricultural production, which includes dry land farming, horticulture production, nursery management, mushroom production, aquaculture, beekeeping and agro-forestry.

Makoni Farmers Association wins global 2014 Equator Prize out of 1,234 nominations

Organic farming transforming livelihoods through diversified agricultural production
Crafting the United Nations Five Year Development Framework for Zimbabwe

The United Nations in Zimbabwe together with the Government, Donors, Non-Government Organizations, and the Private Sector held a Strategic Prioritisation workshop on 17 – 18 September 2014 in Harare.

The objective of the workshop, attended by over 120 participants, was to define where the UN can complement and add value to National Development Priorities for 2016-2020 period.

“The 2016-2020 Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) should be result-based management compliant, in terms of its outputs, outcomes, impacts as well as the monitoring and evaluation framework”, said Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Ray Ndhlukula.

At the two-day workshop, participants deliberated and agreed on the main priorities and outcomes for the 2016-2020 ZUNDAs, as informed by the 2013-2018 Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) and international norms and standards, with a focus on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Participants also agreed on key principles for the design of the 2016-2020 ZUNDAs, with a focus on alignment to the Zim Asset implementation and coordination architecture. The 2016-2020 ZUNDAS is set to be finalised during the first quarter of 2015.

UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Bishow Parajuli expressed his satisfaction on the progress towards the ZUNDAs roll out to date and thanked all stakeholders for their outstanding engagement. Mr. Parajuli said that together with all participating UN agencies and in partnership with the Government and Development Partners, he will work to mobilise the required technical and financial resources to support the implementation of the 2016-2020 ZUNDAs.

UNICEF Representative (acting UN Resident Coordinator), Mr. Reza Hossaini, welcomed and introduced Mr. Bishow Parajuli as the new UN Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe and said, “ZUNDAs remains an important strategic tool for UN engagement at country level and an interface to effectively support national development priorities.”

Mr. Hossaini explained that with the generous financial support from donors, the 2012-2015 ZUNDAs has to-date “contributed to key national development results, which include promoting good governance and building resilient national institutions; strengthening of social protection systems; supporting sustainable agriculture and livelihood opportunities for rural and urban poor; as well as revitalising and strengthening basic services for education, health, and sanitation, as well as HIV and AIDS.”
New Data Shows Positive Trend on Health

The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) launched the dissemination of the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) key findings on 29 August 2014 at the Harare International Conference Center.

The 2014 MICS key findings shows an increase in child immunization coverage from 37% in 2009 to 92% in 2014; an increase in pregnant women visiting antenatal clinics from 57% in 2009 to 70% in 2014. Under-five mortality has declined from 94 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009 to 75 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014. Notably, the maternal mortality ratio has declined from 960 deaths per 100,000 live births for the period 2003-2010 to 614 deaths per 100,000 live births for the period 2007-2014.

Highlighting the positive impact of collaboration and joint support, the EU acting Charge’ d’Affaires and Head of Political Section, Mr. Giles Enticknap noted that the latest MICS data “is critical for measuring progress in the MDGs and in allocating funding for key social sector programmes.”

The Director General of ZIMSTAT, Mr. M. Dzinotizie said, “The 2014 MICS, undertaken under the auspices of the 2012-2015 ZUNDAF, is one of several key national surveys, which were conducted to improve timely generation of data for policy and programme development and implementation by Government, UN and other Development Partners”.

Meanwhile Mr. Reza Hossaini, UNICEF Representative briefed over 70 participants representing the Government, the UN, Donors, NGOs, the Media and members of the general public on the key findings of the 2014 MICS at the 10th edition of the Wednesday@UNIC discussion forum on 24 September 2014. In his brief Mr. Hossaini called for a continued partnership to sustain and build on the positive trends.

The findings of MICS will assist the implementation of 2012 -2015 ZUNDAF and for planning the next ZUNDAF for 2016-2020. In addition, the MICS will not only provide data on Zimbabwe’s progress on most of the MDG targets, it will also provide critical baselines for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

At the forum, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Bishow Parajuli informed participants that “in support of national efforts to sustain and build further on the gains achieved so far, the UN in close consultation with the Government and Development Partners is developing a five year Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework for 2016-2020”.

Led by ZIMSTAT, the 2014 MICS was mainly supported by the United Nations Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF), the European Union, and United States Agency for International Development.
Increasing Young People’s Knowledge in Reproductive Health

In Zimbabwe two thirds of the 13.1 million population are under the age of 24, offering over 6 million reasons to invest in young people. This represents the largest cohort of the population, requiring young people to be placed at the centre of development in the coming decades, if the demographic dividend is to be realised.

Young people in Zimbabwe, especially young women, face a set of unique challenges that range from unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Lack of employment and gender-based violence worsen the situation.

Addressing 1000 young people on the commemoration of World Population Day in Mashonaland West Province, UNFPA Deputy Country Representative, Mr. Xiaoyu Yu, said, “Youth investment in comprehensive sexuality education and health should be at the forefront of our development agenda for ongoing other investments aimed at youth to bear fruit.” The commemorations were held under the theme “Investing in Young People Investing in the Future”.

Over 6 million reasons to invest in young people in Zimbabwe

20% of women age 15-19 are married or in union with a spouse 10 or more years older

In response to the high phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and child marriages, through the ZUNDAF, the UNFPA has been leading the implementation of a four-year Integrated Support Programme (ISP) and other joint programmes on health with funding from the Governments of Canada, the European Union, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The programme is in support of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health of young people. It covers the age groups 10-24 years with specific programming interventions to empower the young people to make informed choices at each stage of their adolescent development.

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Under the ISP, UNFPA introduced a pilot programme in six districts of Masvingo and Mashonaland West through the training of peer educators in the use of social media to increase the utilisation of information and knowledge on HIV and AIDS as well as Sexual and Reproductive Health. The training emphasises the use of social media as a key emerging strategy in information generation and knowledge sharing among young people in their communities through Facebook Clubs, in association with the Young People’s Network-Get Engaged, the Ministry of Health and Child Care, National AIDS Council, Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council and SAY WHAT, a youth NGO.

Young people extensive use of social media across the world has given leaders the opportunity to tap into this and reach them in their own space, says United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Botswana Country Representative Ms Aisha Camara-Drammeh.
Fighting Drug Abuse Among Young People

Up to 200,000 people die every year due to illicit drug abuse, Mr. Yury Fedotov Executive Director of the UN Office for Drug Control (UNODC) said in his 2014 Statement to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Drugs do not just affect the user; they cause tremendous hardship and misery to their families and loved ones as well as constrain economic and social transformation.

In an effort to sensitise the youth on the issues of drug abuse and come up with possible solutions, the United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) Harare, Vienna and Nairobi came together for a cross-WEBEX discussion on 10 July 2014 under the topic: Drug use disorders are preventable and treatable.

Webex is a UNIC-driven internet connectivity platform that allows participants to engage in discussions across borders and continents.

Over 60 participants to the discussion included UNODC staff, experts on drugs issues, students (representing youths), teachers, police officers, parents and NGOs dealing with issues related to drugs. Eshila Maravanyika, Deputy Director UNIC Nairobi facilitated the session, inviting contributions from each of the participating UNICs.

Ernestine Nhapi, vice chairperson of Zimbabwe Institute of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Combat (ZIDAC) said, “In order to promote a society free from drugs we have to solicit commitment from the Government to confront organizations that produce alcohol and tobacco, encourage the youth to participate in awareness that promotes a drug free society and work closely with the media.”

Cannabis is the most widely-abused drug among young people, mostly because it is cheap to purchase. Other drugs such as cocaine and heroin are also commonly abused. According to Detective Assistant Inspector Makina of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Drugs in Zimbabwe’s Police, some people are also abusing cough syrups and valium.

Statistics reported by UNODC indicate that only one person out of six drug users is able to get professional help. Preventive measures proposed by the participants included good parenting, dialoguing, having mentors, and encouraging young people to start and participate in clubs. The youth were also urged to use the media constructively.

The UNODC is currently designing a programme that will bring together stakeholders that include parents, teachers and the students to fight drug abuse effectively.

Only 1 in 6 people using drugs receive professional help, 200,000 people die every year due to drug abuse

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Shifting Development Discourse Towards Innovation

The SHIFT United Nations Week of Innovation Action came to a close on 26 September 2014 with a call for cultivating a culture of learning, innovation and sharing as a catalyst for development in Zimbabwe.

The UNDP led event brought together about 80 representatives from the Government, tech and innovation hubs, youth organizations and the private Sector for intensive week-long (22-26 September) conversation on innovation and development. Also represented were members of the academia, research institutions, NGOs, the UN, development partners and regional participants from Rwanda, Kenya and Botswana.

Addressing participants, the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Bishow Parajuli described ICT as the ultimate connector. He therefore urged them to learn and exchange ideas on the possible nexus between new technologies and development, not just in Zimbabwe, but in Africa as a whole. “Who knows? The next generation of ICT leaders might come from the current classrooms of Zimbabwe or one of the ICT hubs represented here today,” posed the UN Resident Coordinator.

SHIFT initiative represents a shift from the business as usual approach. It is a space for colleagues to collaborate creatively, take measured risks and adopt an outside-in perspective that is driven by the people who inspire our work.

The innovation fair provided a platform for stakeholders in the country to showcases how they are leveraging ICTs to address development challenges, deliver services and foster inclusive collaboration and participation. In addition to Zimbabwean case studies, lessons were drawn from other countries lending a South-South cooperation flavor to the engagement.

The highlight of the event was a conversation on how to establish and nurture strategic public-private partnerships for ICT-led development. This culminated in the formation of a small multi-stakeholder team to jointly reflect on the emerging trends and lessons learnt. The group will also explore challenges and opportunities in this sector with an aim of identifying entry-points for a possible ICT for Development led pilot intervention in the country.

“Development is good for business. Business is good for development.”

Participant says of public-private partnerships

ICT the ultimate connector to accelerate development

A multi-stakeholder team established to promote strategic public-private partnerships for ICT led development
Accelerated Learning Plan Provides Second Chance to Education

In response to the increased demand to address the education needs of youths that are out of school, the United Nations, in partnership with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is providing Accelerated Learning Plans (ALP) or technical vocational programmes as a bridging mechanism back into the formal school system for children aged between nine and 18 years.

This is implemented with the generous financial support of donors to the tune of USD 4.9 million under the Education Development Fund, managed by UNICEF, to scale up the recovery of the country’s education sector under three thematic pillars. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Primary Education, the Second Chance Education programme was specifically designed to provide opportunities to out-of-school children and youth or those at risk of dropping out.

The ALP programme is being rolled out in 25 districts. It seeks to reach about 40,000 children and youth, who will be administered by teachers already working in schools, retired teachers, and community volunteers with a minimum qualification of three O-levels in designated ALP schools.

The project targets out-of-school children, which include children who are orphaned, children from poor families, living with HIV, members of child-headed households, children with disabilities, and children living on the streets.

Data from the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS, 2010) and 2012 Census show that the largest number of out-of-school children in Zimbabwe are youth who have either failed to make the transition from primary into secondary school or those or who have dropped out and are now considered too old to be reintegrated into the formal education system.

In a field mission to Rusape in July 2014, UNICEF crew caught up with Annatoria (12 year old student). She is one of the 40,000 children who have benefited from the ALP programme. Annatoria lives with her mother and six siblings. Unable to pay school fees, Annatoria dropped out of school in 2010. In 2014 Annatoria and her three younger brothers were enrolled to Mabvazuva Primary School (a designated ALP site).

“I like going to school and being with other children of my age. The UN supported programme has helped me a lot as I am more confident in what I do,” said Annatoria. “I look forward to excelling in school and getting to number 1 out of 50 in my class.” Annatoria’s mother, Sara Huta, added, “The programme not only supports the child, but also the family and the community.”
Promoting Youth Entrepreneurs Through Training and Access to Micro Finance

Under the Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework, the International Labour Organisation initiated Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) is positively contributing to changing the lives of youth in nine of the 10 Provinces in Zimbabwe.

The TREE methodology provides youth with training along economic opportunities available in their community and provides post training access to microfinance.

A joint media field visit was conducted in August 2014 to Chipinge district to showcase the progress made to date in the youth economic empowerment programme in the district. Some 100 underemployed youths, who have been targeted for the empowerment programme, chose to engage in commercial dairy farming to contribute to food security initiatives in their local administration. The youths were each given dairy cattle as start-up package.

Shynemore Mhlanga, 26, a young woman with one child benefited from the programme. She received training on dairy production facilitated by the Department of Livestock and Veterinary Services after being enrolled at Chipinge Horticultural College. Shynemore says, “I started to feel more worthy when we got a milking cow and a bulling heifer from the programme. Thanks to the programme, I now contribute to the household and make sure that we have food to eat.”

The youth expressed that the ownership of cattle gives them a new position in the local community and especially the young women feel a sense of empowerment. Shynemore conforms, “The ILO programme positively transformed our economic and social standing in a society where women are treated as subordinates to men.”

The youth have gained a source of livelihood from the sale of milk, and the dairy production is welcomed in the food insecure area of Chipinge as local production has contributed access to cheaper products.

The TREE programme has so far supported over 8,000 young people with skills development and microfinance with an employment rate of approximately 90%.

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