Scaling Up Humanitarian Response to Tackle Worsening Drought

Toll of Drought on Communities • Scaling Up Drought Response • Revamping Coordination • Building Resilience
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Note from the UN Resident Coordinator

I have witnessed how communities are struggling to cope with the harsh drought induced by the worst El Niño in 35 years.

I visited, together with officials from the Office of the President and Cabinet, and the Ambassadors of Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Malawi and Charge de Affaire of Angola, four hard hit districts (Umguza, Bupi, Lupane and Binga) in Matabeleland North in mid-March 2016.

It is indeed heartening to see farming households replanting for the third time at the glimmer of hope from a late onset of rains. It was gratifying to see the District Administrator’s constant engagement with the affected families, providing guidance to the farming households to preserve their asset base by destocking from cattle to drought resistant animals such as goats and to replant drought resistant and short cycle crops such as small grains.

It was reassuring to witness the humanitarian support from UN, Development Partners and NGOs such as Save the Children making a difference in ameliorating the dire situation by enabling communities to put food on the table through food assistance, screening and providing supplementary food to malnourished children, ongoing preparations to initiate school meal programmes to keep children in school.

The UN has been strongly engaged in ensuring a coordinated and timely humanitarian response to the drought. In this regard, together with the Government and in consultation with our development and humanitarian partners, we have been able to put in place a robust humanitarian coordination mechanism; prepare a comprehensive Humanitarian Needs Overview; and a revised Humanitarian Response Plan.

The revised Humanitarian Response Plan appeals for $360 million to provide lifesaving emergency assistance in the areas of Food Assistance and Agriculture, Health and Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education, Protection, and Coordination.

I am pleased to note that since the onset of the drought situation in 2015, the United Nations and NGO partners have been able to reach one million vulnerable people with food and other assistance. The relief response has been made possible by the generous financial and in kind support received from the Governments of US, UK, Canada, Switzerland, China as well as the EU/ECHO and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.

Our response to the drought targets those vulnerable people with the greatest needs, regardless of their political or other affiliations and beliefs, with full transparency and accountability, adhering to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

While responding to lifesaving needs, the UN is also working towards early recovery and building resilience of the communities and local structures to ensure sustainable linkages between short-term humanitarian interventions and long-term development. Our ultimate goal is to address the humanitarian challenge without losing sight of our commitment to work towards long term resilience building and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. That way we will break the cycle of poverty, vulnerability and eventually achieve the zero hunger challenge by 2030.

I strongly appeal to our humanitarian partners for a timely and increased contributions to the Humanitarian Response Plan. The cost of slow and inadequate response could be more expensive with grave consequence to the lives of the affected population and their livelihoods.

This edition of the UN in Zimbabwe newsletter is dedicated to shed light on the partnerships, progress and challenges in the collective humanitarian response in Zimbabwe.
Heavy Toll of Drought on Rural Households

Drought is nothing new to John Chauke (38) and his family from Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province, but this season has been one of the most disappointing across the country for nearly a decade.

Across Zimbabwe, some 2.8 million people are struggling to cope with food insecurity, lack of water, disease and threats to their education and safety. After two years of erratic rainfall and drought one of the most powerful El Niño weather events in 35 years is wreaking havoc on lives and livelihoods of many vulnerable families.

“In the past, the rains were better, and you could get something from the land,” says John. “But now, we have planted more than three times but still we have got nothing from the land.”

The impact of El Niño has been felt most acutely in terms of the extensive crop failure across the country. Given that maize stocks among many households are already depleted – and food prices are high – there is grave concern for the ability of children and their families, who are already struggling to feed themselves and continue to cope until the next harvest in April 2017.

“Often, we are very hungry and we have to make do with just one meal a day. Maize prices have gone up. A 20 litre bucket of maize for example now costs $8 up from $4 at the end of 2015,” John says. “It is very painful when you see your children go hungry, especially when you have no money to buy food.”

The worsening drought has seen water holes drying up and pasture dwindling, leaving farmers like John unable to feed their animals – and unable to sell them for much either.

“Water sources have dried up and we are drinking from the same reservoirs with our cattle. Two of my cattle died last year,” says John. Now, the family is only left with one cow.

The aching hunger and desire for educating his children drives John to continue finding ways to earn money while the drought gets worse. He sometimes does part-time work at the nearby Triangle Sugar Plantation so that he can buy maize to feed his family. Unfortunately, the plantation has been scaling down on casual workers due the effects of the drought.

Whenever he can, John buys beans and maize to prepare one meal a day – usually supper. A wild, bitter Amarula fruit, and leaves from the thorny bushes near their home provides another option. But besides being dangerous if poorly prepared, the fruit is only edible if boiled for 12 hours — with water that is now difficult to obtain.

The infrequency and lack of consistent nutrition in their diet is affecting the children. They have stopped begging for food, knowing there is none. “When there is no food, they do not ask,” says John. “They are now used to living like that.”

Their five year old attending a nearby school sometimes does so without eating, and spends the whole day without food. Information from real time monitoring shows that there is a correlation between attendance and the level of food security with school authorities in Masvingo reporting attendance rates of just below 70 per cent while the national average is almost 90 per cent.

John’s last born child, Ruvarashe, 3, is often sick, and the other children lack energy.

John says his wife is careful to boil water from the river before drinking it to prevent illness, but there simply is not enough water for bathing or cleaning.

“The children normally bathe once a week. My wife left hours ago to search for water and I am not sure when she will be back,” says John. John’s resignation and dwindling hope is evident in many other rural folk around the country.

The UN is working together with the Government, development partners and Non-Governmental Organizations to ensure that affected women and children are assisted in the areas of food; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; health, HIV and AIDS; social and child protection; and education.
A second multi-stakeholders meeting, jointly hosted by the Office of the President and Cabinet and the UN System in Zimbabwe, held on 23 March 2016 called for scaling up of humanitarian assistance to address the immediate needs of 2.8 million (30% of the rural population) drought-affected people.

Addressing over 170 senior representatives from Government and humanitarian actors, the UN Resident Coordinator Bishow Parajuli emphasized that “the drought conditions in many parts of the country have been unprecedented and have severely increased the vulnerability of the poor depriving them of their livelihoods”.

Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Rtd Col Christian Katsande said that the Government has declared a state of national emergency with effect from 3 February 2016. The national declaration of emergency allowed for the establishment of a standing Cabinet Committee on emergency response chaired by Vice President E.D Mnangagwa. The Cabinet Committee has been mandated to coordinate responses and programmes which include: food importation and related logistics; social protection; emergency irrigation rehabilitation and production; livestock support and destocking; wild life relief as well as emergency rural roads repair and maintenance for improved accessibility.

Col Katsande called on the UN and humanitarian partners to scale-up their responses to address the increasing immediate needs of the affected population in the areas of: agriculture; food; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; child protection; and education.

In addition to the looming food insecurity, during the past months, livestock condition and consequently livestock prices have decreased significantly in some parts as a result of poor grazing and water shortages. Out of the 25,000 reported death of livestock.

The drought has also impacted negatively on water supplies. Nationally, 81% of households reported unavailability of water for agricultural purposes (irrigation schemes and gardens). Water has become more scarce with households being forced to rely on unprotected sources, and health risks related to water borne diseases is on the increase, albeit contained thus far.

The eroded productive capacity of vulnerable farming households and the increased food prices have resulted in higher rates of malnutrition, nationally nearly 100,000 children under the age of 5 are estimated to be acutely malnourished.

In response to the joint call by the Government and the UN to scale-up relief efforts, Ambassador of China, H.E. Huang Ping announced that the Government of China will provide rice worth $24.6 million. In addition, USAID Mission Director in Zimbabwe, Stephanie Funk announced that the US Government has committed $40 million and the support will be substantially increased in the coming period. Moreover, the European Union, and UK-AID confirmed their commitment to the ongoing humanitarian response.
Effective Coordination Saves Lives

To strengthen national drought response efforts, the Government has established a national coordination mechanism which includes a Ministerial Committee and a Special Cabinet Committee to oversee the overall response and early recovery. The UN Resident Coordinator and the Office of the President and Cabinet have jointly been chairing a Multi-stakeholder Consultative Forum composed of Government, UN, NGOs private sector and donor community. At sub-national level, the overall drought response is coordinated through the Provincial and District Food and Nutrition Security Committees.

In addition, the UN Resident Coordinator is leading coordination of the international humanitarian community under the Humanitarian Country Team. Moreover, a total of five sectoral groups: Food Security and Agriculture, Health and Nutrition, WASH, Protection and Education have been established. The UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, supported by OCHA, has increased its coordination capacity to facilitate support for inter-sectoral synergies including covering issues such as HIV and Gender Based Violence.

**Funding status on the Humanitarian Response Plan covering October 2015 - March 2016**

![Graph showing funding status on the Humanitarian Response Plan covering October 2015 - March 2016]

**Funding status on the Revised Humanitarian Response Plan covering April 2016 - March 2017**

![Graph showing funding status on the Revised Humanitarian Response Plan covering April 2016 - March 2017]

Humanitarian & Development Partners that have provided financial and in-kind support to the Humanitarian Response:
- Government
- USA
- China
- UK-AID/DFID
- EU/ECHO
- Switzerland
- Canada
- Netherlands
- Dangote Foundation
- UNCRF
- UNDP
- WFP

Government has established a high level national coordination mechanism in response to the El Niño induced drought.
Emergency Response Cushions Farmers From El Niño Blow

“Just the thought of a drought and its effects made me shudder as the one we experienced during the 2014-2015 season left a trail of destruction among farmers. How were we expected to cope with another drought, made worse by the El Niño, as we were still reeling from the effects of the previous one”, says What Mhlaba, a smallholder farmer from Zimbabwe’s Chipinge District.

Mhlaba’s fears came to pass as Southern Africa was hit by one of the worst El Niño events ever recorded. The drought decimated crop yields, reduced pastures and left countries in the region facing a crisis.

However, for Mhlaba - together with 8,000 other smallholder farmers - a $2 million United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) project, implemented by FAO, is softening the effects of the drought. This project is part of the food insecurity response plan that was developed by the Government, UN, humanitarian and development partners as well as Non-Governmental Organizations following a call for support by the country.

“Through this project, FAO and the Government are supporting livestock farmers to access stock feed and supporting crop farmers with drought-tolerant small grain and legume seeds at affordable prices in drought-affected areas of Zimbabwe”, said FAO Representative to Zimbabwe, David Phiri.

“I was watching helplessly as my cattle could not stand on their own, waiting for death, but surprisingly, they recovered a few days after giving them the survival feed. It was a relief as many in this area had lost their cattle”, added Mhlaba.

To ensure that farmers get the most from their animals in the market, farmers were trained in pen feeding of cattle and animal grading as a drought mitigation strategy. Pen fattening ensures that farmers get higher prices for livestock as they destock to maintain smaller, more manageable herds.

By March 2016, the project had sold 3,400 metric tonnes of animal feed and 128 metric tonnes of seeds at subsidized prices to 8,000 drought-affected smallholder farmers.

Some of the proceeds have been utilized to procure additional stock feed as well as rehabilitate water points for both human and livestock consumption. One of the key principles guiding the use of these revolving funds is that the farmers themselves are in the driver’s seat to determine what is most needed and where funds should be directed. It is estimated that the total value of the district-level revolving funds stands at some $500,000.
One and half year old Lumunhu Muchimba gives a loud cry as the Village Health Worker weighs him on the scale. The Village Health Worker quickly notes down the weight before handing the child over to his mother and examines his feet for swelling as a result of excess water retention. The swelling of feet is most prevalent in malnourished children.

“My child has been sick for some time now but he is getting better,” says Manes Mutale, 34, a mother of six from Pashu Village, in Binga District, Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. She has come for a routine review with other mothers of malnourished children during an outreach screening and monitoring exercise at Mulande Primary School, about 150 kilometres from Binga Centre.

UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to carry out a mass screening exercise for malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, especially in the country’s ten worst drought affected districts.

At the clinic or during community outreach programs, the circumference of the arms of all the children under five are measured – a common way to identify malnutrition – and those diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition are admitted at the local health facility. The children are given medication, and administered a highly-nutritious supplement called Plumpy’Nut to nurse them back to health.

Lumunhu’s mother explains that this year’s drought led to her son’s condition. “When we have a good harvest, we eat three times a day,” Manes says. “Before last year’s harvest, we had more than 20 goats, but now, only five are left.”

In previous years, Manes’s family has typically gotten a harvest that fills up 10 to 20 donkey carts. They grow maize, sorghum, and groundnuts, and the harvest is enough to feed the family for the whole year.

But this season was different. The severe drought left the family with only one donkey cart full of millet and about half a donkey cart of sorghum. The groundnuts and maize crops were a total failure.

For Manes and her family to survive, they had to sell their animals and buy food. The adults are eating only once a day now, and the children sometimes eat twice a day. Both are eating smaller amounts.

“The maize we buy in the market is not very nutritious because we get hungry very quickly,” Manes says, “but we have no choice and the price is very expensive now.”

Thokozile Ncube, UNICEF Nutrition Specialist, says health centers in Matabeleland Region are now better equipped to detect early cases of malnutrition. Previously, parents would have to wait until the child was extremely malnourished with complications and then visit the clinic.

UNICEF is presently working closely with the Ministry of Health and Child Care have trained health volunteers in villages to do proactive malnutrition screening once a month.

A health volunteer covers 35 to 50 households in a village. The health worker also advises on proper feeding methods after having been trained on Infant and Young Child Feeding.

Lumunhu’s life was saved when he started the outpatient therapy program and began eating Plumpy’Nut every day, and he has gained some weight.

The severe drought has resulted in the worst malnutrition rates in the past 15 years, as nearly 33,000 children are in urgent need of treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

To help address the crisis, UNICEF working closely with the Government of Zimbabwe and other UN agencies is planning to serve acutely malnourished children up to age 5 in the ten most affected districts.
Reserved Dignity of El Niño Affected Women

El Niño usually means less rainfall but there has been pockets of torrential rains which wreaked havoc in some communities.

“Once I noticed the water was rising fast, I gathered my four children and ran for safety. We nearly lost one of our girls in the panic and rush to get to high ground,” exclaims Maria Ngulube (36) as she recounts the terrifying night her home was flooded by water.

“The water was so powerful, had I not grabbed hold of her arm, she might have been swept away. I had my little boy in my arms, while I held on to her.”

Maria is just one of the 300 women and girls seriously affected by localized flooding caused by torrential rains associated with the El Niño phenomenon in Dulivhadzimu suburb of Beitbridge, one of Zimbabwe’s border towns where UNFPA is providing urgent humanitarian relief to 238 households through the provision of dignity kits to address sexual and reproductive health concerns, and working to prevent sexual abuse.

The Dignity Kit contains a range of basic supplies such as underwear, toothbrush and toothpaste, bath soap, a towel, pain killers, salt, sanitary pads and Vaseline, items which a woman are likely to need for basic hygiene needs. Health and hygiene needs remain urgent for the affected women and girls in the area.

At least 1000 people, including women and girls have been affected by the flash floods and are at increasing risk of disease outbreaks as a result of the floods. Many have lost their valuables and others their sources of income as the floods washed away their stock for resale at the market. Among the affected are pregnant women, some of them at an advanced stage of pregnancy and some lactating mothers.

Rudo Rwezuvha (31) who is six months pregnant is among those who were affected by the floods. She lost materials set aside in preparation for the arrival of the new-born.

“The night of the flood, my bed was totally immersed in water. I remember feeling cold, everything was wet and knee-deep in water and mud,” recalls mother of three Rudo Rwezuvha.

“Our wooden wardrobe was destroyed. I saw my husband’s work tools float away down the road. All the things I had prepared for the child we are expecting were destroyed too. I am worried we may not be able to gather all the items in time for the baby’s arrival. I am very happy that UNFPA has been able to come and assist us. I am especially thankful for the fresh underwear as I only have the pair which I was wearing when the house was flooded.”

Also pregnant expecting her second child is 20 year old Charity Ndere. As she collects her designated UNFPA dignity kit from the town centre in Dulivhadzimu, Charity recalls the moment she realised her home was being flooded.

“At first the flood waters seeped in slowly from under the door. I didn’t think the water levels would continue rising so I stayed in the house but it began rising steadily until it go to the waist level. I watched helplessly as all my belongings began floating in water,” says Charity.

“The next thing I knew we had lost electricity. It was then that my husband and I made the decision to vacate our home. It was a painful decision to just leave our home, all our possessions…”

When asked what she most needed at this trying time, Charity stated “At this moment I would say anything to help me get ready for the arrival of my baby. I would pick that over food if it came to that.”

Despite provision of shelter from local authorities, some affected families have remained in their homes, protecting what remains of their belongings, such as Athalia Mbedzi (49) and her three son’s whose small kiosk was completely flooded damaging their items for sale.

“We chose to stay put instead of running away. You cannot move away from your home because it has been flooded. If it is still standing then you protect it as best you can,” says Athalia who has experienced previous floods.

UNFPA is working with health and protection authorities and other partners in a multi-sector response to the effects of El Niño, including drought, in the country.

“Our response, to protect the lives of women and girls in this crisis is very crucial; we need to respond as quickly as we can to protect their dignity especially in times of crisis such as these,” said UNFPA Zimbabwe Country Representative Cheikh Tidiane Cisse.

“UNFPA is looking to work with partners to strengthen referral pathways, mainstream gender in distribution of food and other items, as well as create temporary safe spaces for women and girls in Beitbridge and we are on alert for any other cases in other flood prone areas because it’s important for us to respond timeously.”
NGOs Crucial in the National Drought Response

National and International Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been playing a crucial role in the drought relief efforts by complementing Government and the UN responses.

Thanks to the generosity of donors including the UK, US, European Union, Australia, Canada, China and Japan, World Vision Zimbabwe (WVZ) has built upon its longer-term development projects to respond to the El Niño-induced drought while preserving progress made in recent years particularly in agricultural productivity; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; health and education.

For example, the Improving Girls Access to Transforming Education (IGATE) program funded by the UK’s Department For International Development (DfID) is a $27 million consortium led by WVZ that is improving the lives of over 100,000 Zimbabweans including 60,000 school girls by improving access to and performance in school through a multi-layered approach to change.

However, many IGATE districts have experienced a drop of over 50% in family income being spent on education due in large part to the drought. As a result, the Provincial Education Department for Matebelaland North noted an estimated drop-out of over 6,000 girls this year. In order to help ensure girls still remain in school, IGATE is committing more resources to improving families’ financial capacity through CARE’s Village, Savings and Lending (VSL) groups. WVZ is also supporting local initiatives and shifting a significant percentage of its child sponsorship funds towards promoting food security in the short and long term through interventions like dam and irrigation schemes.

The $59 million USAID-funded ‘ENSURE’ consortium in Manicaland and Masvingo is also adapting to drought conditions, with its focus on nutrition for pregnant/ lactating women and children under two years old as well as Productive Asset Creation (PAC) and other sustainable programs responding to growing needs in 6 districts prioritized in the latest Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee report.

Other initiatives include European Union-funded fisheries project in Kariba, the DfID-funded ENTERPRIZE consortium focused on food security in Mashonaland Central, the Australia-funded WASH and agriculture projects in Matabeleland South, and numerous UNICEF, FAO and WFP funded projects across the country.

“World Vision has leveraged long-term and shorter term funding streams and integrated disaster risk reduction, resiliency and response with community development programming in ways that have immediate and enduring impacts,” said National Director Edward Brown. “This is only possible through partnerships—with government, donor agencies, other NGOs, corporates, individuals and churches who all have something significant to contribute.”

Consortium Leader Craig Geddes said IGATE is supporting girls from the poorest families to attend schools regularly, thereby improving their educational performance and the social fabric of their lives through auxiliary impacts such as delayed pregnancy and early marriages, increases in girls self-esteem and participation, improvement in their safety and increasing parents financial capacity to pay school fees.

“We are employing nine models to improve educational access and quality for girls. Over the past 3 years, we have seen a significant improvement of marginalized girls that are now attending school and committed to education. One school in Gokwe recorded a 22% jump in attendance since the introduction of the IGATE interventions,” he said.

Geddes said the jump in school attendance can largely be attributed to the multi-layered approach, including the impacts from models such as Channels of Hope Gender which works with faith leaders as well as the Bicycle Education Empowerment Program (BEEP) which has distributed 25,000 bicycles over the past 16 months.

“IGATE has recorded initial huge increase in attendance, performance and safety due to the BEEP program. As a result, children are no longer coming late to school and all exhausted from walking long distances. Safety is also key as there was the risk of young girls being abused on their way to and from school. However the program is not limited to girls as we reserve 30% of the bikes for the male child. We have also set up bicycle supervisory committees and trained bicycle mechanics for the program,” he said.

IGATE operates in 4 provinces and 10 districts with 467 schools and communities. IGATE is a partnership of eight organizations with international agencies being World Vision, Care, World Bicycle Relief and SNV. The local partners are Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe, Emtonjeni Women’s Forum and Happy Readers.

In addition to World Vision, other NGOs such as Save the Children are active in responding to the increasing malnutrition

Save the Children Country Director, Brian Hunter (far right) with Simatelele clinic in Binga District briefing partners on the role of Save the Children in addressing malnutrition. Save the Children has been screening and providing support to 18,000 children of the total 22,000 in the district.

$59 million USAID-funded gramine supports drought mitigation efforts with focus on nutrition for pregnant/ lactating women and children under two years old
High Level Field Visit Appraises Relief and Recovery Efforts

A high key field visit to Matabeleland North to appraise humanitarian and development projects and to raise awareness on the seriousness of the El Niño induced drought in the province was conducted from 16 to 19 March 2016.

The field visit mainly focused on four hard hit districts: Umguza, Bubi, Lupane and Binga Districts.

While in Lupane, the delegation visited rehabilitation efforts funded by European Union and technical support from FAO and LEAD. The delegation visited a borehole in Mkhosi, where the community has access to clean water and about 2,000 cattle are serviced. Prior to rehabilitation the community had travelled 12kms to fetch water and had been filling the 20,000 litre dip tank with water from the nearby Shangani River. With the rehabilitation of the borehole within a 200 meter radius, the community has now regular access to safe water. In addition, the proximity of this borehole eases access for livestock to the much-required dipping services. The rehabilitation of the borehole has had a positive impact in reducing the number of absenteeism at the nearby schools, as the elderly do not have to rely on the young to pump water straight into the dip tank. Dipping sessions and total number of animals dipped have also improved. The delegation had also the chance to visit Matshakayile feedlot which is supporting a total of 1,770 households. This feedlot is key to ensuring that cattle have enough food particularly during the current drought season.

Chininga dam (above), was constructed under the WFP-funded Food-for-Assets and resilience building programme with full engagement of the community.

The Chininga dam, constructed under the WFP-funded Food-for-Assets programme was one of the projects visited by the delegation. At least 300 households (approximately 1,500 beneficiaries) are benefiting from this programme, and the dam is supplying them with water for horticultural crop production and for domestic use. In addition, 1,500 cattle are accessing drinking water from the same dam.

The delegation was also briefed by the Country Director of Save the Children, Brian Hunter and visited a clinic in Simatelele to observe how the health service is coping with the drought situation. The Simatelele Clinic supported by Save the Children and the United Nations agencies (UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO and the World Bank) is tackling increasing cases of malnutrition (regularly screening over 18,000 children monthly out of a total 22,000 children). Working through the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the initiative plays a catalytic role in supporting the Government to address malnutrition and accelerate progress towards achieving Maternal & Child Health and HIV goals.

The delegation observed first-hand humanitarian relief efforts and projects mainstreamed to early recovery and resilience building to ensure linkages with ongoing development efforts in the drought-affected areas.

As part of the on-going development in the districts, UNDP together with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MSMECD) is supporting Savings and Credit Cooperatives Societies (SACCOs). The delegation visited Masithuthukeni SACCO, whose aim is to mobilise savings to increase access to micro credit for its members. As at December 2015, the total group fund had risen to $12,310 generated from savings and interests from internal loans.

The delegation had also the chance to visit Matshakayile feedlot which is supporting a total of 1,770 households. This feedlot is key to ensuring that cattle have enough food particularly during the current drought season.

The visited projects – combine humanitarian, recovery and development - would ensure that these communities are resilient to climate shocks, such as the current drought which has affected the entire country and left 2.8 million people food insecure.
Resilience Building to Tackle Vulnerability

Proudly showing her almost completed restaurant stand, Chipo attributes her economic independence to UNDP supported saving and credit schemes. Chipo's success story is an oasis in the middle of hunger and drought induced by the worst El Niño.

A group of women in Umzingwane District, North Matabeleland one of the worst provinces affected by drought have hopeful future and story to tell. Chipo who two years ago was a tender in a very small restaurant will soon be a restaurant owner. Pointing to her previous work place, Chipo says “my new restaurant has double the capacity of the restaurant I use to work for”.

The demand for micro-credit by rural entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe surpasses supply because of a number of challenges such as limited number of micro-credit institutions in rural areas and also stringent lending conditions.

In response to this challenge, the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MSMECD) in partnership with UNDP is supporting community based Savings and Credit Cooperatives Societies (SACCOS) to increase access to micro credit by rural entrepreneurs in Binga, Mberengwa, Gokwe, Insiza, Lupane and Umzingwane Districts.

Masithuthkeni SACCOS from Lupane District was formed in September 2013 with 12 founding members (10 women and 2 men) with the aim of mobilising savings to increase access to micro credit for its members. As of December 2015, the total group fund had risen to $12,310 generated from savings and interests from internal loans.

Members of the SACCO are engaged in various small to medium enterprises which include: poultry, restaurant, retail shops and welding workshops. The majority of members employ an average of two people.

In its effort to strengthen the capacity of rural micro-entrepreneurs, the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises in partnership with UNDP supported a pilot Kapenta (small fish) Fishing Livelihood Project in Binga. The cooperative has a total membership of 13 members (7 males, 6 females and 3 youths). Kanonge cooperative has been leasing its fishing permit since year 2000 because of lack of start-up capital to purchase its own fishing rig.

The Ministry through UNDP support procured a fishing rig worth USD 16,500 for the cooperative. It was officially handed over to the group by the Minister of SMEs Honourable S.G. Nyoni at a ceremony held in Binga in November 2014. The cooperative started its fishing project using the donated fish rig in December 2014 and to date they have harvested more than 120 x 50 kg bags of Kapenta fish realising revenue of more than $15000.00. Demand for Kapenta is high - the average price of 50kg bag of Kapenta is $150.

The cooperative has also managed to acquire a diesel generator at a cost of USD850, which is meant to ease power pressure on the main engine of the fish rig. Kanonge Cooperative has also used some of its project profits to acquire materials to build a second fish rig that increase the cooperative revenue hence income capacity of the cooperative members.

Chipo and many of the cooperatives who have gained access to the saving and credit scheme share a common thread of a bright future – a future that can withstand any external shock such as recurrent droughts and effects of climate change. A future of resilience and self-reliance.

UNDP, out of its commitment to build community resilience, has been providing sustained access to microcredit and saving schemes. The schemes aim to contribute to poverty reduction by generating income and creating employment hence enabling families to meet basic needs such as school fees and healthcare services.

Under the new 2016-2020 Country Programme, UNDP is leading the development of a strategic framework for resilience and setting up the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF). The Fund, supported by EU and DFID seeks to contribute to increased capacities of at risk communities to protect development gains and achieve improved well-being outcomes in the face of shocks and stresses. Currently the Fund has signed funding agreements for 26 million USD.
Worst El Nino induced drought in 35 years

2.8M Zimbabweans affected

10% of the 28M people affected in the Southern Africa region

30% Zimbabwe’s rural population

Humanitarian response plan in place appealing for $360 million for April 2016 to March 2017

Broken down as follows:

- Food assistance & agriculture: $296M
- Health & nutrition: $11.2M
- Water & sanitation: $25.6M
- Education: $18.9M
- Protection: $7.6M
- Coordination: $0.3M

Mobilised so far: $70 million

People being assisted: 1 million

8.8m Zimbabweans affected

30% Zimbabwe’s rural population

$70 million mobilised so far

1 million people being assisted