



**‘ENSURING NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND’**

**CSO’s Voices on High Level Political Forum 2021**

**Zimbabwe CSO’s SDGs Voluntary National Review Spotlight Report**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Government of Zimbabwe will be presenting its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) report at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2021. To review the country's progress towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Zim CSOs Reference Group on the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> put together its observations through the use of the People's Score Card. The main objectives of the CSOs SDGs Reference group are to:

- To provide a platform for CSOs to engage in a coordinated manner in critical dialogue and contribution towards the SDGs implementation.
- To influence national policy making with a view to creating an enabling and inclusive environment for SDGs implementation in Zimbabwe.
- To promote innovative approaches and initiatives for realizing the SDGs in all the three dimensions: social, economic and environmental.

Government involved the Zimbabwe CSOs SDG Reference Group on SDGs and other stakeholders from the initial 2021 VNR Inception meeting through to the Validation meeting of the draft 2021 VNR. Government also requested stakeholder views towards the 2021 VNR through the SDGs coordinating Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Consultant engaged to draft the VNR. As part of its mandate the Reference Group met virtually on 23 February 2021 to discuss the approach for the 2021 HLPF submissions to the government. The meeting agreed to adopt the People's Scorecard as a tool for evaluating SDGs as well as carrying out the initial evaluation of the overall delivery of the SDGs.

The People's Score Card is a product of Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD) which works in partnership with national SDGs focused civil society coalitions around the world. The meeting also served as a training platform for the use of the People's Scorecard. Following the People Scorecard Training, the CSOs SDGs Reference Group members were given almost a month to consult their membership and complete the scorecard. Due to the time limitations and for fear of having the CSOs views not being taken up, the completed scorecards were shared with the government Consultant commissioned to draft the country's VNR report before the validation. However, the CSO Reference Group on SDGs then held an online webinar on Friday 23 April 2021 to validate

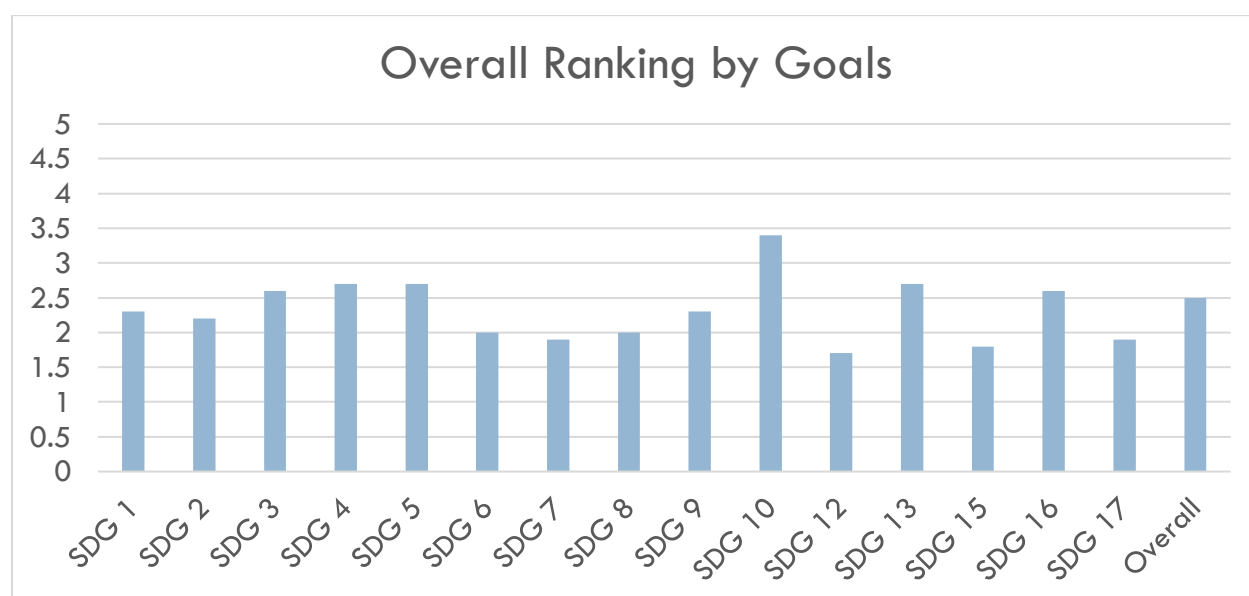
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<sup>1</sup> The Reference Group is comprised of; Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) (convener of the Reference Group; CARITAS Zimbabwe; the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ); the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA); the National Coalition of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCPDZ); the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of children (ZNCWC); HelpAge Zimbabwe; SAYWHAT, the Human Rights NGO forum; and National Association of Youth Organisation (NAYO), National Council for the Care of the Handicapped ( NASCOH), Zimbabwe Evaluation Association (ZEA), and Zimbabwe United Nations Association (ZUNA). The key Government stakeholder is the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare.

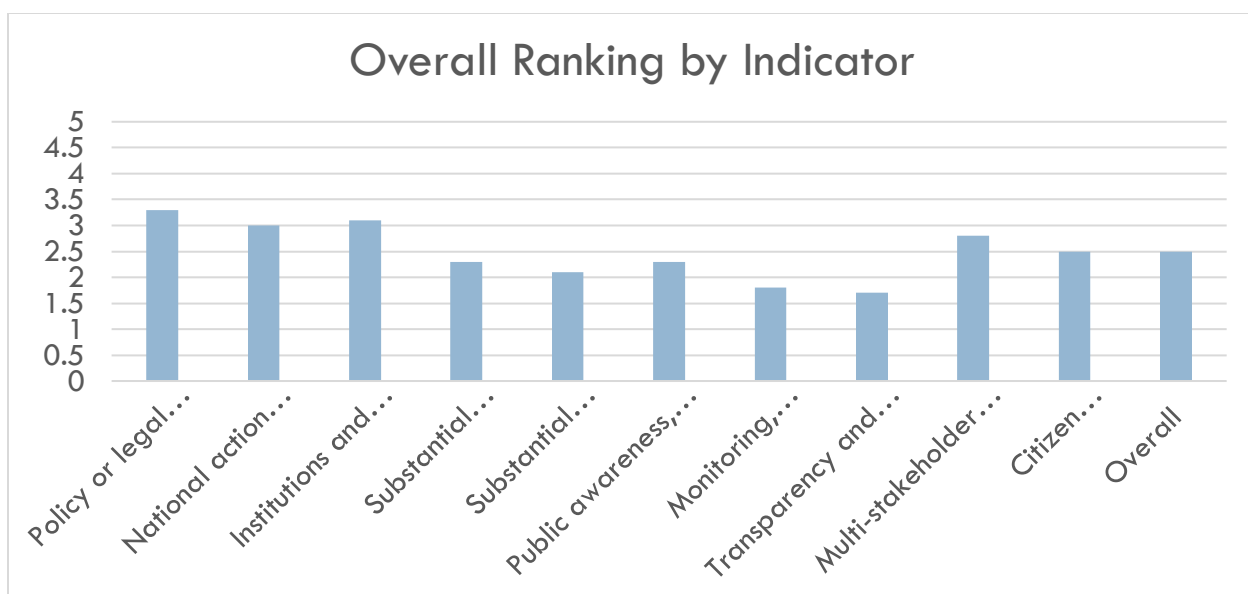
the people scorecard findings and review the Government's draft VNR with the information findings shared with government.

This report provides CSOs' perspectives and analysis on the progress that has been achieved more specifically since the country's first VNR in 2017. The report also looks at the challenges including the impact of COVID-19 on attaining SDGs and comes up with recommendations for building forward better in the Decade of Action. The Reference Group undertook a review of the 17 Goals with the exception of Goal 14 on Life below water which the government has well is struggling to incorporate in its prioritization since Zimbabwe is a landlocked country.

## 2.0 Key Findings



- The general CSOs perception is that overall SDGs progress is still low at 2.5. Only 6 Goals out of the 15 reviewed had a ranking of 2.5 and above out of possible highest score of 5. SDG 4, 5, and 13 on Quality Education, Gender Equality and Climate Action respectively both had a score of 2.7. There is also notable progress with respect to Goal 3 on Good health and wellbeing and Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions which both had scores of 2.6. However there are challenges with respect to Goal 12 on responsible production patterns which has the lowest score of 1.7 albeit ranked by the women sector only. Goal 15 on life on land is the second least performer with a score of 1.8. The perception is also that the partnerships for the goals are weak with Goal 17 getting a score of 1.9 as is the case with Goal 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy.

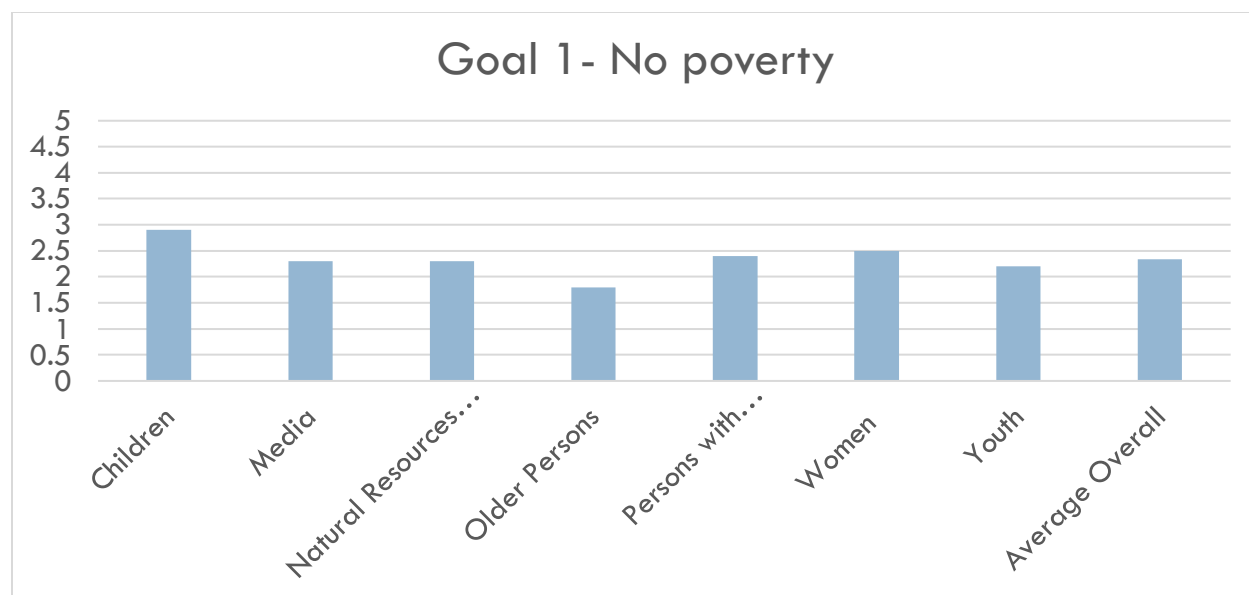


- Zimbabwe has a fairly comprehensive policy and legal framework in place for most of the goals while the country has also committed to most international agreements related to the SDGs. Policy or legal framework including commitment to international agreements had the highest overall score of 3.3. The Constitution of Zimbabwe is fairly progressive with a comprehensive Bill of Rights in place. Policies are also in place with the Vision 2030 as the guiding policy. During the period from 2017 to date, the Transitional Stabilisation Plan (TSP) succeeded the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) as the country's development plan running from 2018-2020. This was followed by the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) which is to run from 2021 to 2025. NDS1 has social indicators in place aligned to the SDGs, Vision 2030 and the Agenda 2063.
- Zimbabwe is doing well in terms of setting up relevant institutions and agencies with clear mandate which are important in addressing SDGs. As such the institutions and agencies had a ranking of 3.1 out of 5. While the institutions are in place the operations of these institutions are hampered by inadequate resources.
- However, while policies and specific national action plans are in place for a lot of the goals the biggest challenge is the inadequacy of resources. As a result of the budget constraint there is weak implementation of policies, action plans and strategies. Progress in implementation of policies and programmes on a regular basis has a low score of 2.3 while implementation at the local level is even lower at 2.1 out of 5.

- Public awareness, education and capacity building mechanisms and activities are available for some of the goals but there are still challenges. Some of the challenges include poor and inaccessible information as some of the information is not disability friendly and or not available in simplified local languages. However there are some improvements particularly with the translation of the NDS1 to 14 local languages including braille and sign language. There is need to improve the distribution channels of the available information to ensure its in palatable formats and meets the needs of all persons with all forms of disabilities. Overall progress for public awareness, education and capacity building mechanisms is at 2.3.
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms and procedures are in place but in most of the cases these are not made public hence the low average score of 1.8. As a result, there are issues in terms of transparency and accountability with the indicator on transparency and accountability with the least score of 1.7.
- There are some functional multiple stakeholder partnerships in place especially in relation to Goal 3 and Goal 4 and Goal 5. The key partnerships include between government institutions, development partners, CSO and the private sector and others. Multiple stakeholder partnerships have a slightly above average score of 2.8.
- The Constitution of Zimbabwe has a framework for citizen participation in the development processes in place such as section 121 which calls for citizen participation in the development processes. Citizen participation and civil society engagement is available but not widely shared and also not disability friendly as there are gaps including ensuring that consultations are held in accessible forums particularly for PWDs. Information gaps and untimely information gaps also worsens citizen participation while coverage for consultations remains low and centralised in provincial centres. Further devolution of civil participation frameworks must be considered to ensure there is no one and no place is left behind. Citizen participation and civil society engagement has an overall score of 2.5 out of 5.

### 3.0 Review of 17 SDGs

#### Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere



#### Goal 1 Progress

- Average overall score for Goal 1 is 1 at 2.3 reflecting the rising poverty. Poverty is on the increase with Extreme poverty (based on food poverty line of US\$29.80 per person per month) increasing from 22.5% in 2012 to 30.4 % in 2017 and 38.3% in 2019. Poverty (based on lower-bound poverty line of US\$45.60 per person per month) increased from 54% in 2017 to 57% in 2019<sup>2</sup>.
- The Children sector has the highest score of 2.9 followed by the Women's sector with 2.5. The relatively high scores are from strengths in the policy and legal framework, institutions and agencies, multi stakeholder partnerships and citizen participation. However, the other sectors ranked Goal 1 below 2.5 with the Older Persons sector giving the least score of 1.8 in part due to the poverty induced by the erosion of value of pensions.
- Government of Zimbabwe has established a comprehensive social protection legal and policy framework (Constitution of Zimbabwe with a strong bill of rights, Relevant Conventions, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CEDAW, UNCRC and ACRWC, UNCRPD etc). The legal framework supporting social security floors is in place and this includes The Social Welfare

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/publications/Income/Finance/Zimbabwe\\_Poverty\\_Update\\_2017\\_19\\_Final.pdf](https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/publications/Income/Finance/Zimbabwe_Poverty_Update_2017_19_Final.pdf)

Assistance Act (Chapter 17:06); The Disabled Persons Act (Chapter 17:01) (currently being amended) Private Voluntary Organizations Act (Chapter 17:05)(currently being amended) Refugees Act (Chapter 4:03) National Heroes' Dependents Act (Chapter 10:06) Older Persons' Act (Chapter 17:11) The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) Act (Chapter 17:04) The Children's Act (Chapter 5:06)(currently being amended)

- On the policy front, Zimbabwe scores highly with the development policies put together since 2017. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy paper which lapsed in 2019, the Transitional Stabilisation Program and now the National development strategy NDS-1 all speak to issues that relate to poverty reduction. NDS1 has specific poverty mitigation strategies and targets, while the 2021 budget incorporated poverty targets for the first time. The country is in the process of finalizing the Disability Policy and there are provisions of ending poverty and economic empowerment for PWDs.
- Additionally, the government has established various plans and programs to support provision of social protection such as -The National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) (2015); The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) Phases I (2007-2010), Phase II (2011-2015) and Phase III (2016-2020). The Child Protection Fund, Street Children Fund, Pensions Fund, Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTO), Public Assistance Fund, Pensions Fund, assistance to war veterans, etc (ongoing) nutrition and food assistance schemes, schools feeding, humanitarian response programs to emergencies like Cyclone Idai/COVID 19 and inclusion of free sanitary wear provision for school children.
- The establishment and continued support to Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) though riddled with challenges including low funding and beneficiary selection is another positive. Additionally, the proposed expansion of the Harmonized Cash Transfer Programme (HSCT) from 19 to 23 districts (2019 – 2020) was aimed at addressing the poverty gap.
- There are a number of women empowerment projects which help in poverty eradication such as the startup capital projects provided for women in small to medium enterprises by the Women's Bank and Youth Empower bank. Other programs include financial inclusion projects in the form of money revolving initiatives such as the internal savings and lending schemes (ISAL/mukando). Women in rural areas are also being empowered in nutritional gardens, bread making, candle making, poultry and other projects by Non-Governmental



Organisations (NGO). Legalizing small scale mining to pave way for employment opportunities to youth which will help end poverty.

## Challenges

- While Zimbabwe has made progress in terms of coming up with the legal and policy framework for ending poverty, the low budgetary allocations to poverty alleviation programmes with no minimum set standards for budgetary allocations, under budgeting and irregular financing is the biggest challenge. Implementation remains a key challenge for the Government. For instance, IPRSP 1 had good goals and targets and even included budget allocations to support the identified strategies. However, due to poor financing and resource management most of the strategies were not implemented fully.
- Another example is the HSCT where provisions were pegged at USD25 but with the exchange rate policy shift from USD to ZWL these allocations in ZWL have been eroded by inflation and are way below the poverty datum line. The per-capita expenditure on SSP is too low. In 2018, social welfare allocation from the national budget was US\$38 per h/h; in 2019 it was US\$70.55 per household yet total consumption poverty datum line (TCPL) was around US\$590 per household.
- In the 2020 national budget Social Protection was allocated US\$222 million, of which US\$114 million is under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW), US\$57.2 million under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and US\$51 million under the Ministry of Agriculture. Although this was an increase from 2019 budgetary allocation of US\$48.9 mil but still low in terms of global targets (at least 7% of GDP) currently still at 1.2%. Allocation for BEAM in 2018 was US\$23.5 million for 415,000 OVC which translated to US\$56.47 per child per year; for 2019 it was US\$31.6 million which was US\$70.96 per child per year.
- The unstable macroeconomic climate, inflation and fluctuating exchange rates have eroded social protection funds and pensions. The disasters including the reoccurring droughts, Cyclone Idai and the COVID-19 pandemic have also worsened the poverty situation for the majority of the people. On the other end the natural disasters have shown limited planning for social protection in emergencies.
- Resources available for spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) are compromised by corruption, illicit flows and leakages especially in the mining sector. Another challenge is lack of transparency and accountability in the selection criteria of beneficiaries.

- Although there are some social protection programmes targeted at different groups, the lack of comprehensive data base on PWDs compromises their targeting yet they are the most affected in terms of poverty. Institutions aimed at ending poverty are also not adequately resourced while the Disability Board frequency of meetings is erratic.
- Additionally, the lack of awareness of the social protection programmes and the various empowerment programmes including the financial inclusion is another challenge. Information is not available in local languages or disability friendly formats thus not accessed by potential beneficiaries.
- In Zimbabwe people are getting poverty wages which undermines the attainment of other SDGs including the SDG 1. Most Zimbabweans are earning below the Poverty Datum line and are not able to afford social services such as health care services which undermines their productivity.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

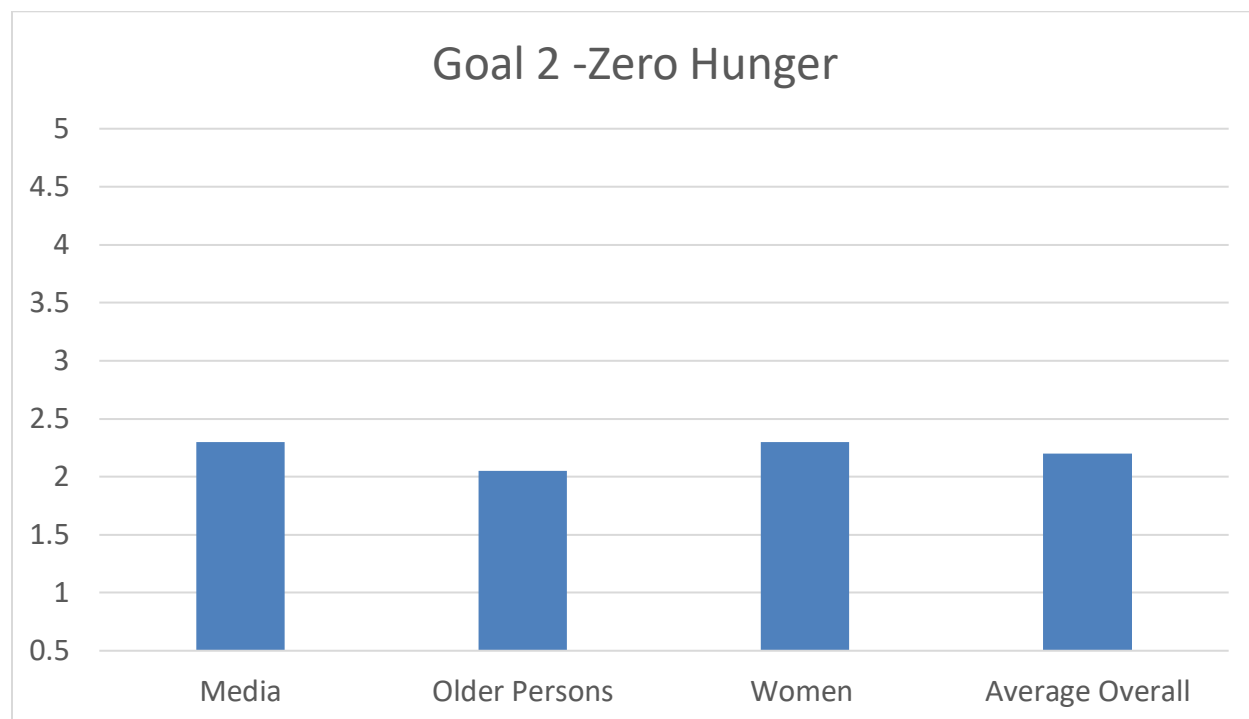
- The COVID-19 has put an added strain on the already limited resources to social protection programmes and this is worsened by the harsh economic environment as a result there are limited emergency relief funds available.
- Beneficiaries had difficulties accessing their social assistance benefits due to lockdown restrictions.
- Zimbabwe's economy is largely informal with more than 70% in the informal sector. The measures to contain COVID-19 such as travel restrictions, lockdown and curfews, hit hardest the informal sector further putting more people in poverty.

### **Recommendations for Goal 1**

- GOZ spends 1.2% of GDP or 7.3% of total national budget on social assistance programmes which is inadequate compared to the current and emerging social protection needs; There is need to increase social spending to the levels of other regional peers of above 2% of GDP on average.
- For the 2020 fiscal year, Social Protection was allocated US\$117 million, with 85% budgeted from domestic resources and 15% from development partners. Although the increase in public sector financing is commendable, there is need to further scale up domestic resource mobilisation, to cover the gap created by declining donor support.

- Government of Zimbabwe should prioritise implementation of the recommendations of the Social Protection Sector Review.
- Institutional strengthening is vital especially governance of the National Social Security Association (NSSA), and finalization of outstanding pieces of legislation and policies that protect the vulnerable e.g. Disability Policy. Other laws such as the 2012 Older Persons Act need to be strengthened particularly plugging the loopholes concerning financing of benefits.
- Poverty alleviation strategies should focus on building resilience for communities especially as the country faces more emergencies.
- Strengthen monitoring systems to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability of social protection programs and ensure the programmes must apolitical and free from corruption.
- Enforcement of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate honouring of pension benefits was set up in 2017 recommended compensation, without specifying the compensation framework.
- The government needs to sign the Protocol to The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security.
- Expedite the amendment of Mines and Minerals Act and review the Communal Lands Act to allow equitable and sustainable access to mineral resources and natural assets for poverty eradication.
- Government must increase women's and PWDs access to land as an empowerment tool which will help reduce poverty.
- Greater inclusion of CSOs in Government programs especially in the context of COVID-19 as Government created its own platforms to coordinate response and efforts to reach the marginalized and hardest hit and affected.

## Goal 2 - End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



### Goal 2 Progress

- Progress towards achieving zero hunger is very low with an average score of 2.2, with all the three sectors that ranked the Goal all giving scores below 2.5. This is a reflection of the food insecurity in the country and the low yield for most crops. The 2020 Zimbabwe Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), launched on 2 April 2020, indicated that 7 million people in urban and rural areas were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance across Zimbabwe, compared to 5.5 million in August 2019. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) score increased from 28.8 in 2016 to 34.4 in 2019. This was attributable to the erratic rainfall and drought which put downward pressure on food and livestock production. However on a positive note there has been a reduction in stunting in children under five from 27% in 2015 to 23.5% and 29.4% in 2019 and 2020 respectively. The percentage of underweight children increased by about 21% from 8% in 2015 to 9.7% in 2019 while the percentage of overweight children under five declined from 6% in 2015 to 2.5% in 2019<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/publications/Social/Health/MICS2019/MICS-2019.pdf>

- Section 77(b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe guarantees the right to sufficient food. There are good policies that have been put in place towards achieving zero hunger. These include the national agriculture policy framework, Command Agriculture, Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan (HRGP), Accelerated Irrigation Rehabilitation Growth Plan and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). One of the programmes under the CSA is the Pfumvudza/Intwasa program that is a crop production intensification approach under which farmers ensure the efficient use of resources (inputs and labour) on a small area of land in order to optimize its management. Preliminary second round crop assessment statistics for 2020-2021 season shows that average maize yields for smallholder farmers under Pfumvudza/Intwasa is significantly higher at 5.28 tonnes per hectare compared to the national average of 1.15 tonnes per hectare for small holder farmers.
- Government has also put in place a number of financing mechanisms that include the irrigation facilities, livestock facilities while there has been progressive increase in agriculture funding in the national budget. The total budget for agriculture for 2021 is ZWL 46.3 billion against a total budget of ZWL 421.6 billion that is more than 10% in line with the Maputo declaration, in which African countries committed to allocate at least 10% of their annual budgets to agriculture.
- Fiscal incentives in the national budget that include the suspension of duty on some agricultural inputs and equipment such as fertiliser, fertilised eggs, greenhouse structures etc. are contributing towards agriculture productivity and ending hunger.

## Challenges

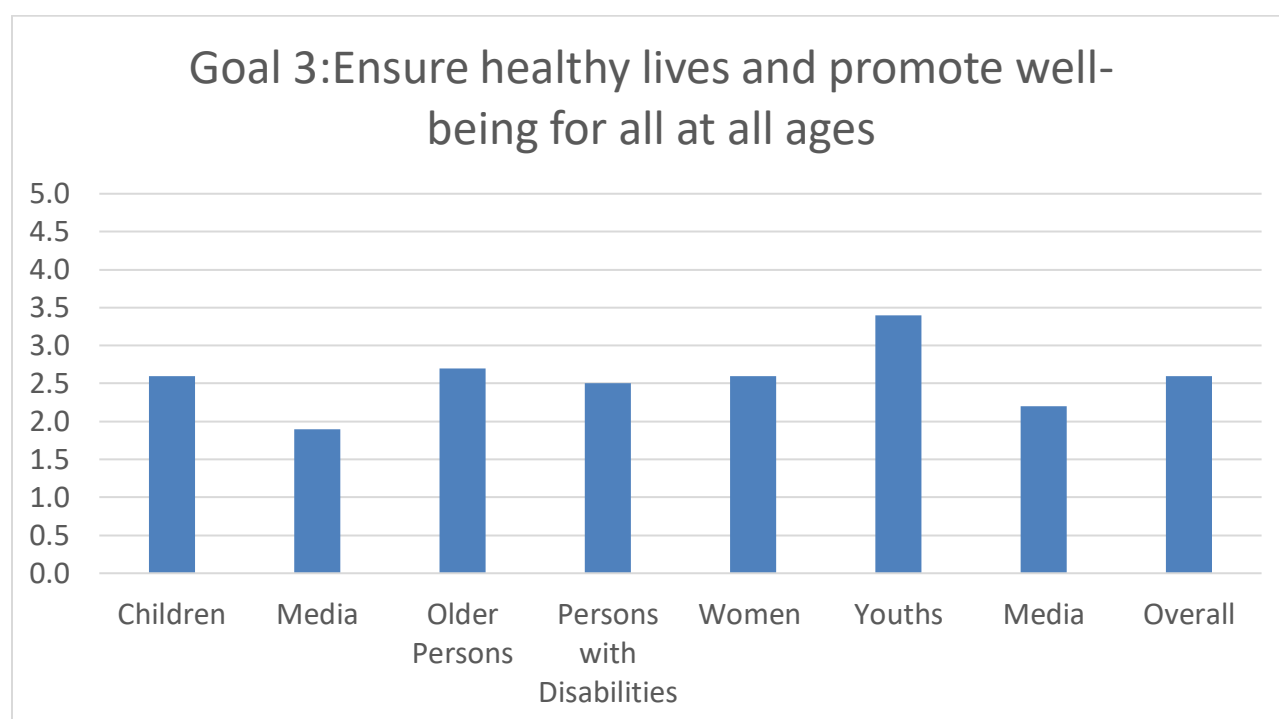
- Zimbabwe has experienced a number of droughts, which have often resulted in crop failure, loss of livestock and power outages. In August 2019, the government declared the 2018/19 drought and cropping season “a State of National Disaster” and appealed for international humanitarian assistance. According to the World Food Programme more than 7.7 million people - half the population faced food insecurity at the peak of the lean season, as poor rains and erratic weather patterns in the 2019/2020 season have a negative impact on crop harvests and livelihood prospects. Cyclones and flooding are also the other challenges that affect many areas with Cyclone Idai in 2019 the most devastating.
- Livestock pests and diseases have resulted in loss of livestock with outbreaks of Theileriosis or January Disease decimating cattle herds in Mashonaland East.

- Transparency and accountability in agricultural facilities is another challenge that has been identified.
- On the other hand, measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic particularly the first lockdown that started in March 2020 had a negative impact to access to markets especially for fresh farm produce.

## Recommendations

- Marginalised groups including women, PWDs and youths should be given opportunities to own land. There is need to expedite the land audit process to identify more land for redistribution.
- Government funded inputs should not discriminate people with disabilities, women, young people and other marginalised groups.

## Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



## Progress

- Progress on Goal 3 is just above average with an overall score of 2.6. Youth had the highest ranking of 3.4 followed by the Older Persons with 2.7, while the Children and Women sectors both gave a score of 2.6. PWDs and Media sectors had the least scores with 2.5 and 1.9 respectively. Notable progress include the

decline in maternal mortality ratio from 614 in 2014 to 462 in 2019<sup>4</sup>. The HIV prevalence among the population aged 15-49 declined from 15.1% in 2010 to 11.8% in 2020. Basic vaccinations going well including COVID-19 although this had a slow start. Disability policy component on health is expected to improve access to health for PWDs. There has been some improvement in terms of COVID-19 awareness, pre-recorded message have sign language.

- The share of the Ministry of Health and Child Care budget to total budget increased from 7% in 2020 to 13% for 2021, only 2 percentage point short of the Abuja Target. Although the increase in health allocation is of paramount significance the sector has been heavily burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Constitution of Zimbabwe has provisions for health for all. Government has put in place a number of policies and programmes aimed at improving access to health. National Health Strategy for Zimbabwe 2016-2020 which seeks to achieve 'Equity and Quality in Health in line with the Leaving no one behind principle. Others include the free user-fee Policy for pregnant women, children 5 years and also adults aged 65 years and above, HIV Prevention Revitalisation Roadmap, National ASRH Strategy, NAP for OVC, Mental Health Policy, National Health Policy, and the School Health Policy. The Health Financing Policy and Strategy in June 2018, where Zimbabwe became the 17th country in the WHO AFRO Region to develop a health financing policy and strategy is another notable milestone as well as the 5 percent levy to the Health Fund.

## Challenges

- Neonatal Mortality at 31 deaths per 1,000 live births and remaining largely unchanged over the past 15 years. There has also been an increase in Non-Communicable Diseases that need urgent attention.
- The lack of funding and resources has been the major challenge for the health sector leading to shortage of skilled personnel, lack of essential medicines and equipment. There have been frequent strikes by health personnel which has crippled the health delivery and also massive brain drain.
- There is still a wider gap on accessibility and affordability of quality health care especially to the most vulnerable groups.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/publications/Social/Health/MICS2019/MICS-2019.pdf>

- Persons with disability are the worst affected when it comes to access to health. Challenges faced by PWDs include discrimination, infrastructure, tools and other materials that do not take the unique needs of people with disabilities.
- There is also an evident gap with regards to provision and accessing of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services by adolescents both in urban and rural areas.
- Government must also work on improving disaster management which was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Idai.
- The shortage of facilities and eroded infrastructure with patients traveling long distances especially in rural areas.
- The high infant mortality rate with significant urban rural disparities is a cause for concern.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

- The heavy burden was put on the health sector which is already crippled with inadequate resources thus reducing quality and quantity of health services.
- Quality services was not attained as health workers were not confident to offer services due to unavailability of appropriate COVID-19 PPEs. Strikes by doctors and nurses caused by the lack of PPEs disrupted the health sector.
- The Perennial drought and COVID -19 lockdown have left many children severely malnourished.
- Adherence to HIV treatment was compromised due to transport and user fees challenges. On the hand the right to privacy was compromised especially for people living with HIV who were forced to disclose their status in order to pass through COVID-19 related security check points.

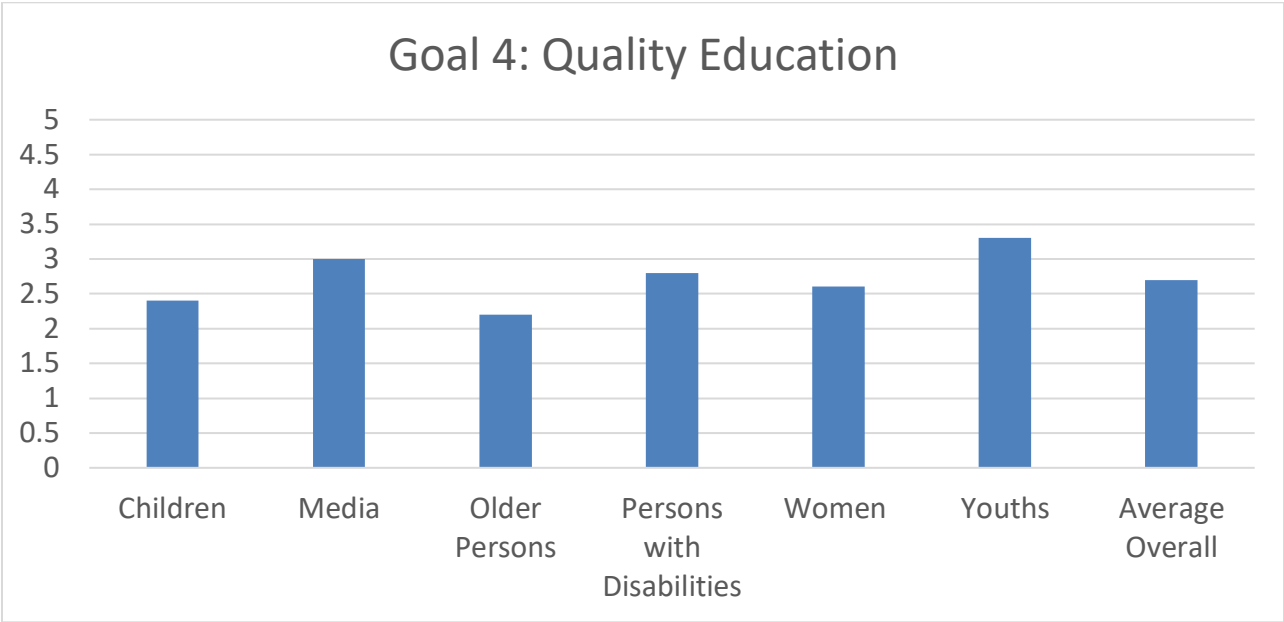
### **SDG3 Recommendations**

- There is need for adequate stakeholder's consultations during the development of policies including the National Health Strategy 2021 – 2025. PWD should be included from design stage.



- Increased domestic health financing other than relying on development partners who funds almost 80% of the health sector.
- Government must clearly outline monitoring and reporting systems and publicize fiscal financial and audit reports. E.g. 5% health tax on mobile and internet airtime, National Aids Council (NAC) funds etc. Corruption in the sector needs to be addressed and reporting will help improve transparency and accountability.
- To improve on Social Protection for health purposes so that an individual can access services even outside governments institutions where they are not available in public institutions.
- Expedite the alignment of laws to the constitution especially the aspects that provide support to the older persons.
- Government must ensure equitable and comprehensive access to health care. There is need for robust strategies that ensure that all children are delivered at a health facility.
- In order to improve access to health for PWDs there is need for improved infrastructure that is disability friendly and a responsive health system. Training of health personnel on how to interact with the PwDs without offending or discriminating them. Sign language has to be used in all health centers to accommodate those who are hard of hearing while all health related public awareness programs must be in accessible formats for all including PWDs.
- There is need for the establishment of a sugar tax to fund Non Communicable Diseases.
- State must address the underlying causes of women's vulnerability to STIs and HIV.

**Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**



**SDG 4 Progress**

- Goal 4 progress score is at 2.7 with the youth sector giving the highest score of 3.3. The other sectors gave scores slightly above 2.5 with the exception of the children sector and old persons sectors which gave scores of 2.4 and 2.2 respectively.
- Provision for the right to education under Section 75 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe entitles every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe to a basic state-funded education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable legislative and other measures, must make progressively available and accessible. The government has enacted the Education Amendment Act that seeks to align the Education Act with the Constitution and other international statutes for the provision of an inclusive and equitable quality education. The policy has been described by many as progressive. The Centre for Education, Innovation, Research and Development Bill though not yet gazetted presents hope on research.
- The Disability policy has some positives that will help in inclusion in the education sector including facilitation of birth certificates issuance. The policy to facilitate the employment of teachers with impairments is now being implemented well than before providing equal access to opportunities for all.

- The new curriculum is progressive although it requires resources to be implemented. This is the same for the STEM programme and vocational interventions including making informal education accessible. The female scholarships also help improve gender equality. Maternity leave for female students is progressive as well as according prisoners a chance to learn as part of correctional facility.

## **Challenges**

- The share of the education as a percentage of the budget remains low and below the recommended 20%. For 2021, Primary and Secondary Education received a total allocation of ZWL\$ 55, 221 billion, about 13.09% of the total national budget which is a 0.31 percentage point decrease from the 2020 budget. Most of the budget also goes to recurrent expenditure with little available for infrastructure development and operations.
- As a result, there is a shortage of schools, teachers and learning material. There have also been damaging teachers' strikes that have compromised the quality of education. Student to teacher ratio remains very high and this has an adverse effect on the quality of education delivered.
- Access for children with disability is still a challenge. As with other sectors there are infrastructure gaps with most schools still not disability friendly. Learning material and some examinations are also not in disability accessible formats. For example, Mathematics paper 2 and Science paper 3 examinations are not accessible for children with visual impairments.
- There are still some communities where due to some harmful cultural practices the girl child is still learning up to grade 7 denying them opportunities to further their education and against the SDGs leave no one behind principle.
- Due to lack of knowledge and access to SRHR, there has been a high rise in teenage pregnancies resulting in children becoming mothers and denying them access to further their education.
- The prolonged industrial strike of teachers was a setback.
- The low pass rate at all levels even before COVID-19 is a cause for concern. COVID-19 worsened the situation with some schools experiencing zero percent pass rate for grade seven results.

- The examinations are poorly managed with the examining body failing to eliminate corruption and leaking of exam papers compromising the quality of education.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

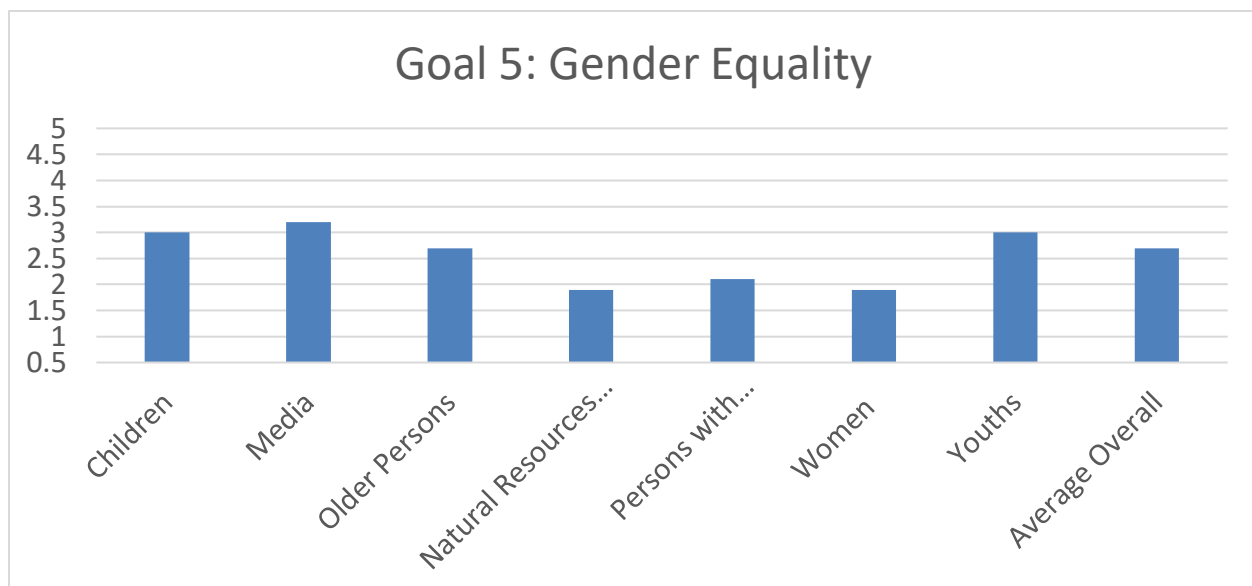
- Serious disruptions to the learning schedule for scholars. Virtual learning which was introduced was only accessible to very few scholars who had access to gadgets and the radio within their households. Access to e-learning is very low with almost 70% of children in Zimbabwe especially rural areas without access to internet. High data costs and lack of radio signal in some areas were the other challenges.
- Some parents are illiterate and could not help with home schooling while some parents of children with disabilities struggled to help children with disabilities at home.
- The lockdown also took a huge knock on the toddlers learning routine as they were still at an early stage of acquiring knowledge and a lot of room to totally forget what they learnt was created with the prolonged lockdown, also bearing in mind that it's not all parents who could assist them to continue learning at home.
- Rise in child delinquency within schools e.g. children taking drugs, engaging in immoral behaviours within the school environment due to poor monitoring by the teachers.
- Most households' incomes fell below the poverty datum line – this had an adverse effect on livelihoods and ability of parents to pay for school fees.

### **SDGs 4 Recommendations**

- There is need to look at rural school funding and the financial burden in schools which has ultimately affected their capacity due to their stringent budgets and limited income.
- Government should make all learning materials and examinations accessible for children with different impairments. There is need to ensure access to information for students and educators with disability, sign, braille and other formats.
- Government to make provision of internet coverage for marginalized schools to support learning during pandemics like COVID-19.

- Increased funding to enable schools to purchase COVID-19 prevention materials and provision of adequate WASH infrastructure.
- Re-introduce pay outs to students in institutions of higher learning such as universities and teachers and poly technical colleges in order to mitigate harmful coping mechanisms including sex work among students.
- The Ministry must improve on consultations on education related issues e.g. the reopening of schools process was not consultative.
- Subsidised or free assistive devices such as wheel chairs, spectacles, crutches, hearing aids for learners with disabilities. Government must consider having a specific budget on infrastructure to make education centres accessible and promoting inclusive education.

### Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



## Goal 5 Progress

- Goal 5 has a ranking of 2.7 with the media sector giving the highest score of 3.2 closely followed by the children and youth sector both with scores of 3. The Natural Resources and women sectors had the least score of 1.9.
- Several policy and legal frameworks are in place such as provisions in the Constitution on gender equality. Zimbabwe is signatory to several international and regional instruments which advocate for gender equality such as CEDAW & ICCPR & ICESCR among others. There is continual progression towards meeting these by the Government, for instance in Education there is affirmative action for women to allow them access and within the Parliament there is proportional representation of women.
- National Gender Policy Implementation Strategy and Action Plan ; National Action Plan and Communication Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2019-2021); National Gender Based Violence Strategy and a National Programme on GBV Prevention and Response (2016-2020); Zimbabwe Women Micro Finance Bank and Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises has established a Women Development Fund which is a platform that provides loans to women's projects at an interest rate of 10% per annum.
- In recent court rulings, women can now access inheritance from their deceased spouses and have increased powers with regards to family inheritance issues. In previous cases, women had no voice over such matters.
- Government has a line ministry dedicated to gender issues and an independent commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and Gender Desks across all government ministries tasked with addressing gender equality and policies.
- Government and partners make concerted efforts to bring awareness to programs that relate to gender and to empower both males and females in the delivery of these critical programs. These are mostly available in Government-civil society partnerships e.g. Spotlight Initiative.
- The government for instance, through its line ministry runs key interventions on gender which build capacity in soft and practical skills like sewing, poultry and carpentry.

- Proposed amendments of laws to promote gender equality such as those for Marriages, SRHR, and second chance education are the other positives. etc.; establishment of institutions e.g., Gender Commission.

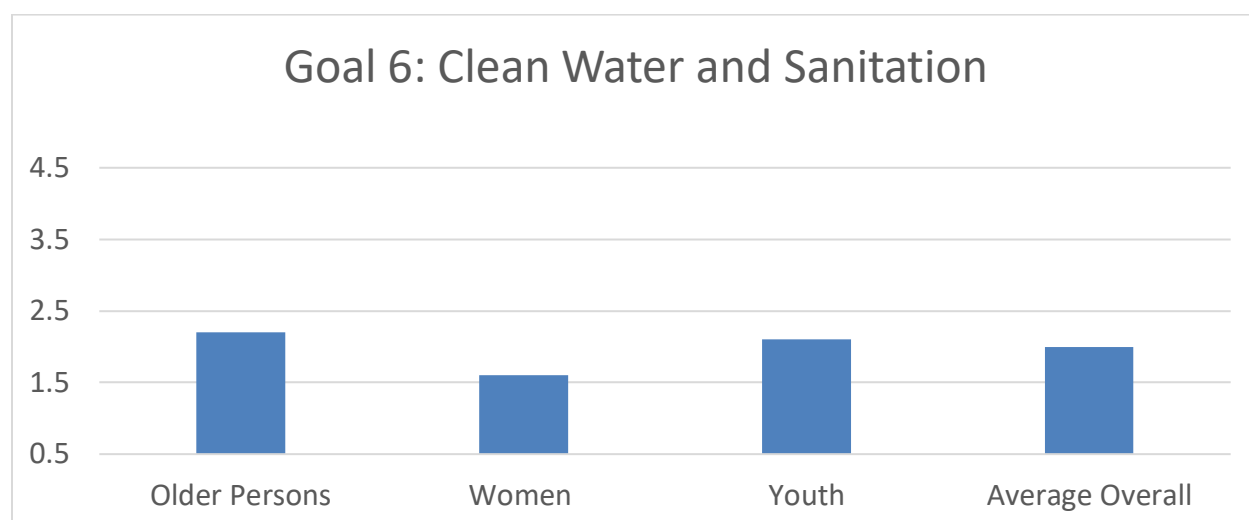
## Challenges

- Implementation in any Government program remains a key challenge, there are always clear gaps between policy, plans and the practice of government agencies. For instance, the constitution advocates for 50-50 gender representation but across all sectors women continue to be under represented.
- Access of young women to sexual and reproductive health services and rights is a key issue – the 2019 national budget committed to provide free sanitary ware to female scholars. Whilst noble, the initiative was poorly executed. Whilst policies and plans might provide for access, in practice there is no access at the different points at which health is accessed by young women and men.
- Shrinking Civic Space, Lack of political will, Rampant Corruption, Gender Equality all disproportionately affect women.
- Intimidation and stigmatisation of women in politics is still rampant
- COVID-19 exposed real problems, Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases were on the rise.
- No access to health, restriction of movement, murder, suicide and mental health cases are on the increase.
- Loss of livelihoods for women who are mostly in the informal sector.
- Closure of schools resulted in high rates of teenage pregnancies and child marriages (as reported by Minister Sithembiso Nyoni).
- Loss of lives and the increased burden of unpaid domestic and care work.
- Prioritisation of COVID-19 at health facilities compromised other health services.

## Recommendations

- Putting in place strategies to ensure the progressive realization of 50-50 gender representation as provided for within the constitution in key areas and institution.
- Need to put in place social protection programs which protect women in the event of health epidemics as witnessed with COVID-19 which creates shocks and has ripple effects across the entire fabric of society.
- Increased Government investments in the economic empowerment of women.
- Political parties must empower women. Women in leadership positions and their participation in civic processes needs to be enhanced as well as introducing local initiatives to boost their participation. Such as training women in governance, encourage taking up of local, village, ward positions, proportional representation to start from constituency level up to parliament.
- State to ensure elections are free from violence which inhibits women participation.
- Public education to deal with women in politics stigmatisation.

## Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all





## Goal 6 Progress

- Progress on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is very low with an average score of 2. The three sectors all ranked the progress on the goal below 2.5 in a clear sign that more needs to be done.
- Water is recognized as a right within the Constitution. Further to this, the Government has put in place a policy and strategy on water and sanitation with various government and UN agencies projects being rolled out on the same. There are gaps on the Government committing for instance to human rights standards on water. For instance, water quality remains poor – water availability is a key issue with most households failing to access water from the water points within their households and water accessibility is a concern too.
- Significant budget allocation in the 2021 budget allocation earmarked towards the development of alternative water sources for major cities and towns. One of the projects includes the construction of the Muda and Kunzvi dams. The completion of the he Nyamandlovu Epping Forest boreholes project which services the city of Bulawayo and surrounding areas in 2021 is another positive milestone.
- The courts in recent years, have passed landmark rulings which have protected the right to water. This places emphasis on the need to ensure the provision and accessibility of water to all citizens.

## Challenges

- Most citizen's travel for long distances to access water yet ideally water must be accessible within a radius of a kilometer. Water and sanitation policy must be in place, the advent of COVID-19 placed water, hygiene and sanitation at the center of fighting the pandemic. There are serious challenges on water provision in urban areas. New urban settlements, most of them, do not have sewer reticulation systems.
- Budget allocations targeted for water related projects rarely cascade to the intended development projects on account of lack of financing and corruption with government agencies.
- There have been several institutions set up by the government that include the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), Water Catchment areas as per the rainfall regions within the country among others. Each local authority has water

works department which focuses on the supply of water at the local level. However at times these institutions do not always seem to pull in the same direction. The formation of Provincial Water and Sanitation Subcommittee (PWSSC) and District structures in most areas gives a platform for Water and Sanitation Health to be better coordinated and visible.

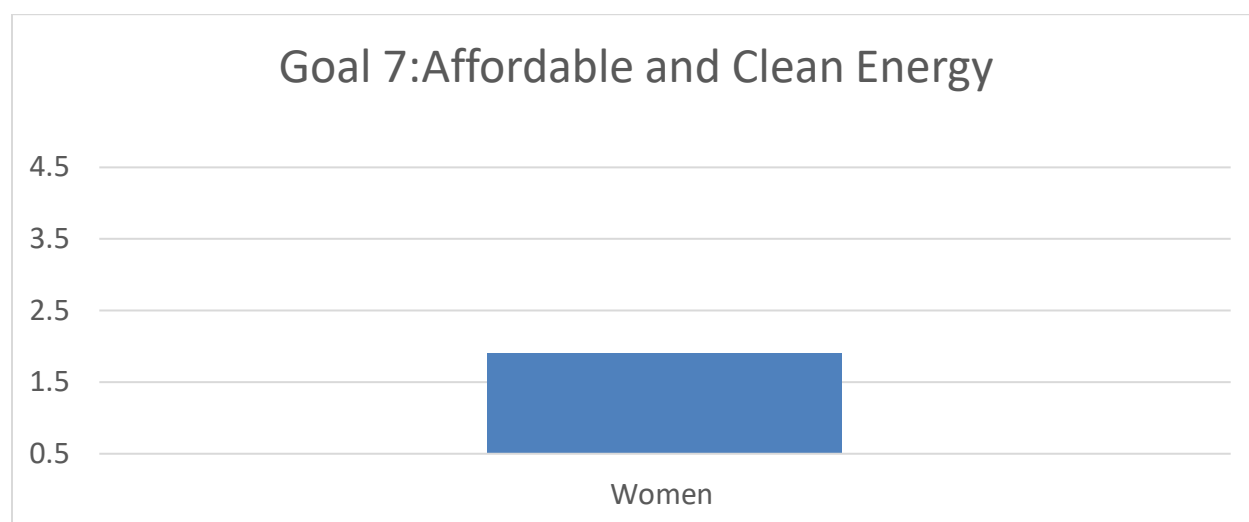
- Transparency and accountability in the water sector is problematic. There is corruption around water tenders, procurement of water treatment chemicals and on the purchasing of equipment for infrastructural development related to water projects.
- Most water points and sanitation facilities under state and non-state actors are not ageing and disability friendly e.g. bush pumps and squat toilet holes.
- Citizen participation and civil society engagement is still not at the required standard. However Through the #ClaimYourWaterRights for instance, civil society organizations like the National Association of Youth Organizations (NAYO) is mobilizing Youth to demand the right to water by way of using both physical and virtual activities to place demands on the Government. These include online protests, petitions to local authorities, water point demonstrations and engaging with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC).

## **SDG 6 Recommendations**

- Adoption of the AAAQ Framework in ensuring the progressive realization of the right to water for all. This denotes water quality, availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality. The framework sets clear standards per each bench mark.
- There is need to work on water harvest initiatives and intensive borehole drilling.
- Rejuvenate government decision-making structures at all levels.
- Develop one comprehensive updated water sector policy, covering all subsectors; also develop a sector strategy and financing plan to achieve updated national targets.
- Update national data sets through audits and needs assessments; and develop one monitoring framework and a process of annual joint sector reviews.
- Develop a national capacity building program.

- The urgent case for increased investment needs to be made at the highest levels while there is need for the development of an overall sector financing strategy.
- Institute inclusive coordination mechanisms, working in partnership with parallel financing modalities, and establish an independent sector regulator.

### **Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**



### **Goal 7 Progress**

- The women sector which is the only sector to rank the goal gave a score of 1.9. Zimbabwe has come up with a National Renewable Energy Policy which seeks to increase access to clean and affordable energy. The policy has targets for renewable energy in the country based on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### **Challenges**

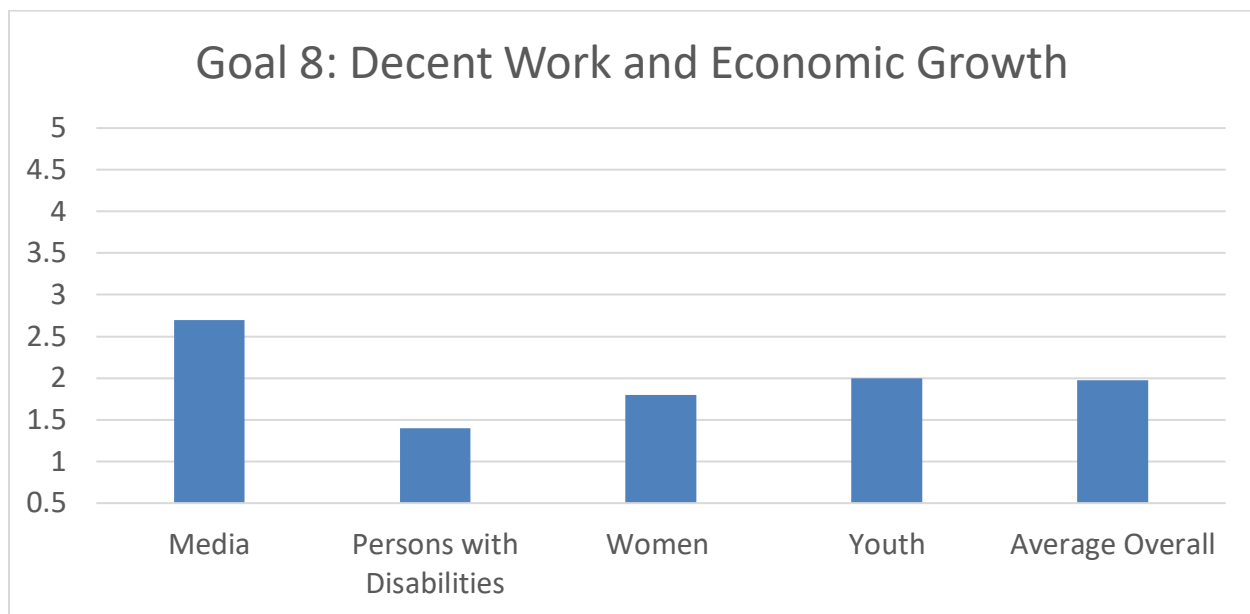
- Most of the strategies are still in formative stages hence the need to speed up the implementation process. Government is still lagging behind in terms of coming up with strategies of smart energy

### **Recommendations**

- More investment in solar energy and expanding fiscal incentives in the budget to promote clean energy.

- Education and awareness in community on the importance of energy.
- Monitoring and enforcement of regulations to ensure companies do not harm the environment.
- There should be a clear youth engagement strategy for the young people who have knowledge and interest on solar energy.

**Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**



- Progress towards decent work and economic growth is low with an average score of 2. All the sectors that ranked the Goal had scores below 2.5 with the exception of the Media sector that scored 2.7. This is a reflection of the poor performance of the economy with GDP estimated to have declined by -6% in 2019 and -4.1% in 2020. Year-on-year inflation peaked at 838% in July 2020 eroding workers' wages and pensioners' income.
- Informal economy is important for most of the goals including alleviating poverty. However, there has been a gap on informal sector workers' working conditions, infrastructural development, harassment and violence as they fall victim to council and police harassment making their workplaces unsafe and not decent.
- Not much was done to improve working conditions in the informal sector and nothing was done to create a safe environment for those working in the informal sector, they are still exposed to harassment and abuse.

- There is lack of clear cut on government's part to formalize and revitalize the local industries in the country.
- There is need for Government to make employment inclusive policies and to reindustrialise and formalize sectors that are of economic concern.
- Government of Zimbabwe must address challenges within the informal sector through specific programs.

## **Challenges**

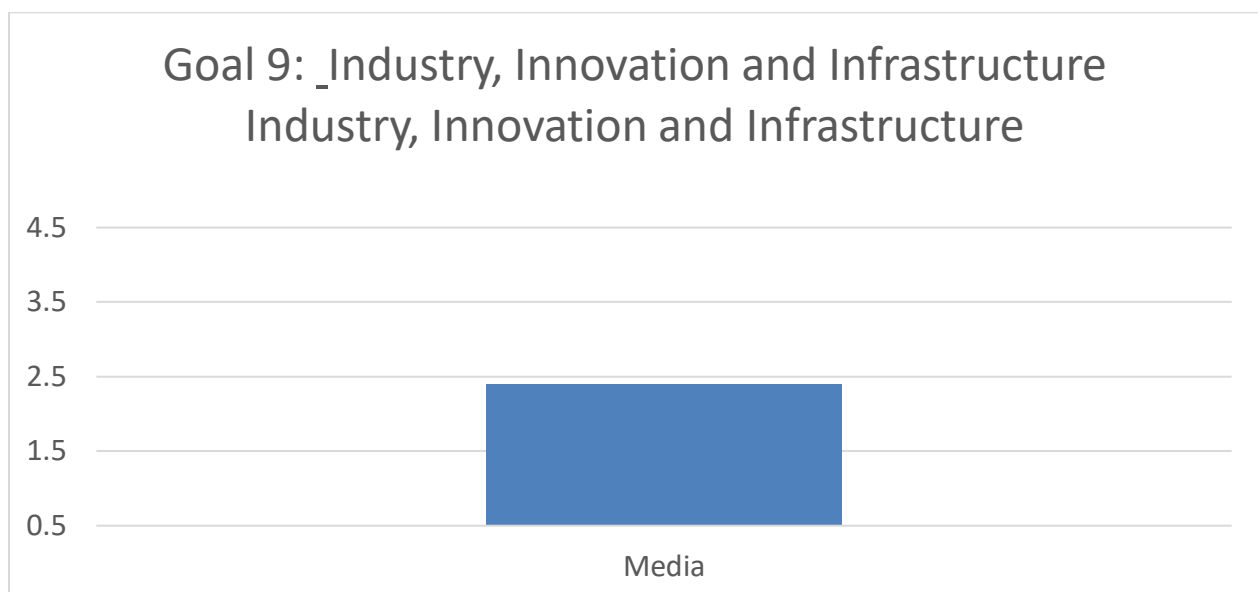
- The main challenges identified are lack of transparency and policy consistency in the management of the economy.
- COVID19 put everything on a standstill, many ministries by the mid-term review of the budget had not claimed even half of the funds allocated to them.
- High Interest rates and need for collateral/guarantors made people shy away from applying for loans.
- Closure of business resulted in lagging in the production and manufacturing sector.
- People lost jobs due to COVID-19, informal sector could not operate, and most people are dependent on the informal sector.
- Demolition of structures during lockdown was a major setback for informal traders.

## **Recommendations**

- There is need to address economic fundamentals first before providing economic blueprints which fail afterwards.
- Disability policy if adhered to can see improved employment of people with disabilities.
- The stance by Empower Bank and other banks to provide templates of business plans is good.
- The support from banks including Banc ABC, Stanbic and others to have hubs for entrepreneurs is also a good move.
- More should be done to capacitate young people to have registered companies.

- More support to civic society, even in terms of allowing them to operate freely and get international support.
- Dedicated resources in economic ministries towards fulfilling goal 8, departments or desks to coordinate some of the issues affecting PWDs.
- Disability representation in economic ministries should be improved and policies must be taken from an empowerment perspective rather than a charity model.

### **Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**



### **Goal 9 Progress**

- The media sector gave goal 9 a score of 2.4. Zimbabwe's infrastructure across all sectors is in a bad state. Zimbabwe is ranked number 127 out of 138 countries in the Infrastructure Index under the 2017-2018 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report which is indicative of the poor state of the country's infrastructure.

- The NDS1 identified infrastructure and utilities as one of the priorities targeting improving infrastructure development and investment in energy, water, sanitation, roads, health, education, housing and social amenities;. NDS1 also seeks to accelerate value addition and beneficiation of agriculture and mining production.
- Despite the poor state of infrastructure in most of the sectors significant progress has been made in the ICT sector. For example, in 2017, fixed broadband (fiber) and mobile broadband stood at 8,765km and 3,74 mobile broadband base stations respectively. At the end of 2020, approximately 9500km fiber and 4,012 mobile broadband base stations had been deployed amid the harsh economic conditions. As a result there has been an increase in active mobile penetration rates of 94.2% and the internet penetration rate, which stood at 60.9%, as at the end of 2020 having increased from 50.8% in 2017.
- Another positive is the development of Community Information Centres (CICs) in a bid to further the knowledge and appreciation of ICT throughout the country. CICs are mainly focused on serving the ‘underserved and unserved’ communities as far as ICT is concerned.

## Challenges

- According to NDS1, the past two decades have been marred by economic challenges, which led to difficulties in ensuring the continuous rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure including expansion of critical areas.
- Funding constraints are the major challenge. According to the IDBZ, Zimbabwe’s entire road network would require about US\$5.5 billion. It also estimated that the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) requires in excess of US\$2 billion worth of investment for its rolling stock and to rehabilitate its entire network.<sup>5</sup>
- Demolitions of houses deemed to be illegal structures is another major setback for citizens.
- Natural disasters such as the several cyclones that have hit Zimbabwe like, Cyclone Eline and Cyclone Idai in 2019 left a trail of disaster. People in Chimanimani and other Cyclone Idai affected areas still living in tents almost two years of the cyclone.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.idbz.co.zw/sector-operations/transport>

- There are still digital gaps that need to be addressed. The Digital terrestrial migration is yet to be completed.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

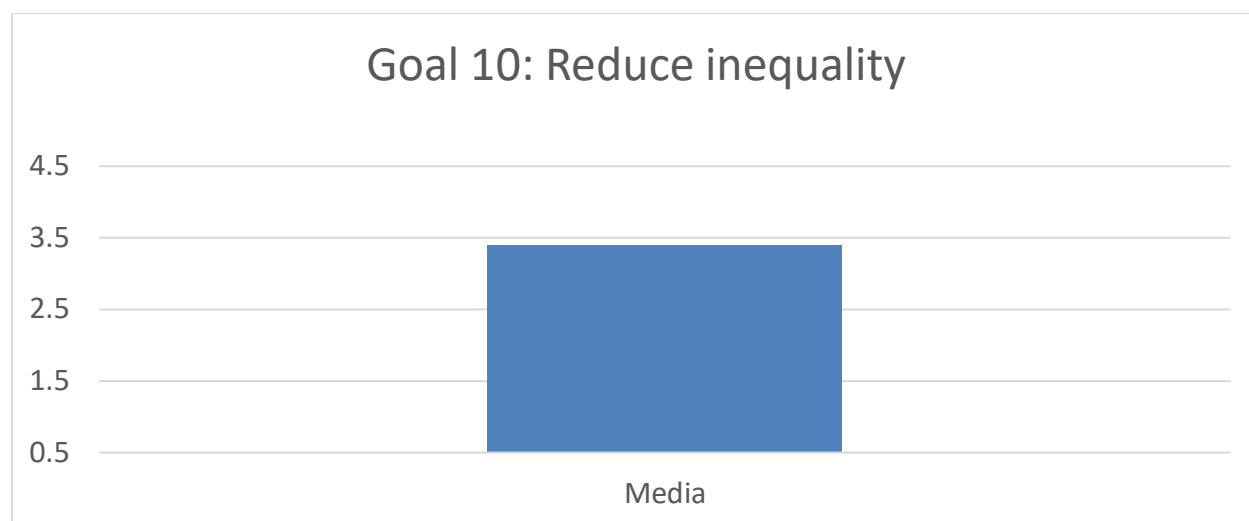
- COVID-19 response made plans change. Priority was given to setting up and revamping COVID-19 centers including quarantine and isolation centres.
- Limited access to information by rural and marginalised communities.
- Increase in costs of acquiring data for conducting business, education and other work online remained a major challenge.

### **Recommendations**

- Mechanism for safe relocation of people and acquisition of stands should be regulated to cushion citizens.
- Stiffer penalties to land barons and a monitoring mechanism put in place.
- There should be more awareness to the public on plans.
- Accountability should be improved.
- Re-evaluation of all information centres established through the Universal Services Fund.
- Development of more infrastructure to facilities access and use of ICTs in Zimbabwe.
- Development of a cybersecurity and data protection framework in line with international standards and best practices.
- Deliberate and intentional exercise of functions by POTRAZ.
- On public transport infrastructure, Government has to import Buses which are disability friendly and also educate bus staff members on how to communicate and engage with disabled persons without offending or discriminating them.



## Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries



### Goal 10 Progress

- Goal 10 has a score of 3.4 according to the media. This is mainly on account of the considerable success stories on issues of gender equality.
- However, inequalities have been generally on the rise in the country. The Zimbabwe Poverty Update 2017–19 shows that inequality rose as the Gini index increased from 44.7 in 2017 to 50.4 in 2019. The increase in inequality was driven by a rise in inequality within urban and within rural areas rather than between urban and rural areas.

### Challenges

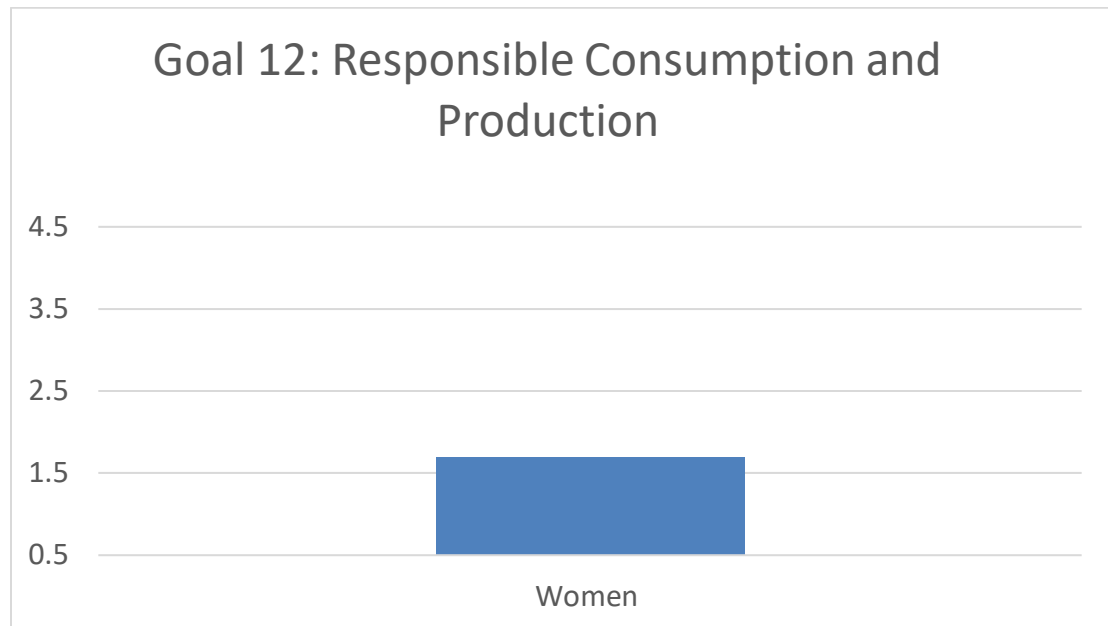
- There is still more work to be done regarding inclusion of women in mainstream politics and also equal rights to state resources and democratic space in Zimbabwe.
- The rural urban digital divide is worrisome while COVID-19 has exposed the inequalities and exposed the need for policies that are inclusive.

### Recommendations

- Increase investment in social protection and better targeting of the schemes. The policies must be inclusive and cover all segments of the society. For example some older persons that are living with vulnerable and orphaned children are living in intense poverty.

- There is a need for political will and politically untainted commitment in order for equality to be fully realised in Zimbabwe.

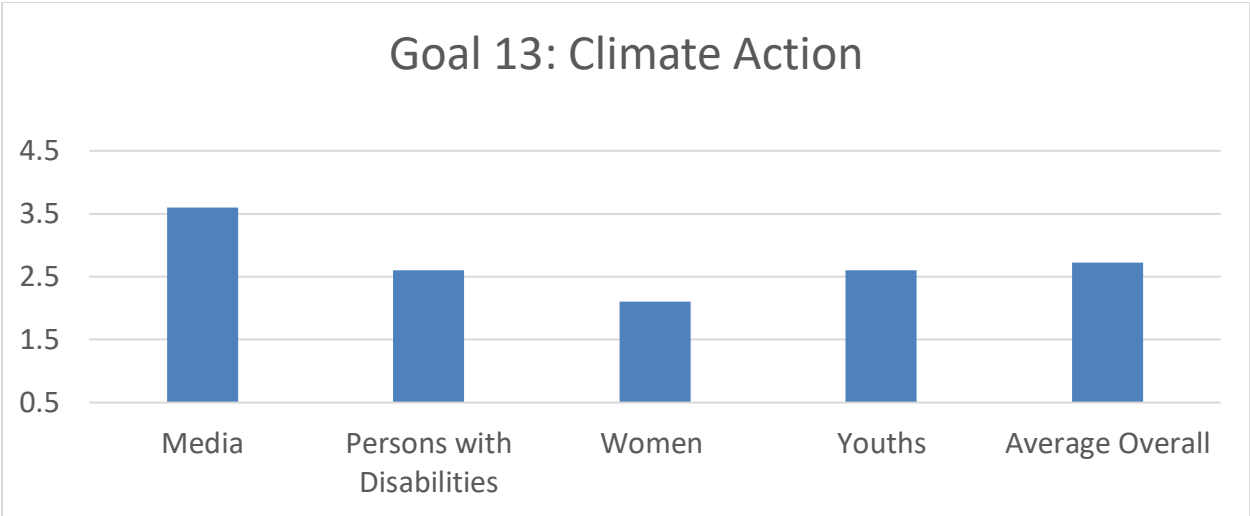
## Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



## Goal 12 Progress

- Goal 12 is ranked very low with the women sector perceiving level of commitment on the goal at 1.6.
- Legal and policy framework is in place to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. These include Section 73 of the Constitution, ZERA ACT and Electricity Act (Energy) and Environmental Management Act.
- Institutions in support of the Goal include the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Forestry Commission, Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority, REA etc.
- However, despite having policies and institutions in place implementation is very weak partly due to resources constraints. There is a general lack of transparency and accountability and no published Monitoring and Evaluation.

**Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**



**Goal 13 Progress**

- Progress in Goal 13 is slightly above average with an overall score of 2.7. Media and PWDs sectors ranked progress to be medium with the media giving a score of 3.6 and PWDs 2.6 while youth and women gave a raking of 2.6 and 2.1 respectively.
- The legal and policy framework for the goal is in place. Section 73 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for environmental fundamental rights and freedoms. Zimbabwe ratified Paris Agreement.
- The National Climate Policy aims to enable Zimbabwe to establish the legal structures to regulate businesses in climate-related matters, and enable them to reduce their greenhouse gases emissions. The Policy further focuses on adaptation with regard to rural communities and agriculture. Other policies include the National Child Friendly Climate Policy, Renewable Energy Policy, the Forest Policy and other strategies aimed at achieving climate resilience and sustainable development. These include the Agriculture Manual for Agriculture Education in Zimbabwe, National Climate Change Response Strategy, National Environmental Policy and Strategies and National Climate Change Learning Strategy. The Government developed the Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategy (LEDS), for the period 2020-2050, in response to the global climate change crisis. The Climate Smart Agriculture policy will help in the adaptation to climate change.

- Government established the Department of Climate Change Management. The Department is mandated with promoting best practices in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to enhance the country's response and capacity to manage the impacts of climate change. There are also other several functional agencies of government taking an active role in delivering on mandates related to climate change within the government.
- Some progress in implementation of policies and strategies has been noted. For instance the Integrated Climate Risk Management for Food Security and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe Focusing on Masvingo and Rushinga Districts from the Green Climate Fund. The project is being implemented by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement together with World Food Programme (WFP) Zimbabwe. The project will strengthen national and community adaptation based on climate forecasts and information.
- Several solar plants and projects have also been rolled out in the country which are contributing electricity to the national grid.
- There are efforts from Ministry and Environmental Management Agency (EMA) to build partnerships with PWDs and other stakeholders. The National Cleanup Campaign launched by the President in December 2018 is another important milestone bringing together all stakeholders in cleaning up the environment.

## **Challenges**

- Although the legal and policy framework and strong institutional arrangements, the main challenge is on the financing of those plans.
- There is lack of disability framework and limited participation by PWDs in climate change related programs.
- Low awareness on climate change issues and information including policies not in accessible formats such as language and disability friendly. However, some CSOs are plugging the gap with organizations such as the Green Governance Zimbabwe cascading information within the Manicaland Province.
- COVID-19 disrupted and slowed progress in resettlement, accessing social protection of climate change victims, e.g. Cyclone Idai victims.

## Recommendations

- Government has done well in development of relevant policies e.g. national renewable energy policy, biofuels policy. However, these now need to be supported by budgetary allocation so that renewable energy is taken to a higher level than the current levels.
- The need to use traditional methods of preserving water.
- There is need for law enforcement on gold panners.
- Focus should be put towards afforestation and concentrate on indigenous trees.
- Educate people on climate change using vernacular and recycling of waste.
- There is need for climate resistant infrastructure.

**Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**



## Goal 15 Progress

- On Goal 15 to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, the Natural Resources Governance observe that progress is very low at 1.8. Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of 1971. The Constitution through section 73 as well as the Environmental Management Act chapter 20:27 and Forest Commission Act have provisions in support of Goal 15.
- Government established Environmental Management board through EMA Act. Government amended the Forestry bill to improve its efficiency in managing forestry ecology. Revised the national biodiversity strategies and actions plans to mainstream biodiversity priorities into national and sectorial planning processes. In addition to EMA other institutions available include the Forestry Commission and the department of Parks and Wildlife conservation.
- There are more recent policy documents aimed at advancing goal 15 from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Settlement<sup>6</sup>.
- NGOs are playing their role of complementing government in raising awareness and building citizens' capacity to be vigilant of resources in their localities and demand transparency and accountability from their government.

## Challenges

- There is a lack of commitment when it comes to resources for institutions that implement effectively policies to protect environment. Corruption and politicization of these institution is also on the rise.
- Wetlands are being sold as residential stands in urban areas.
- There is less commitment from government though there is rich legal framework in Zimbabwe that advance protection of forests and other forestry species. Mining licenses are being issued without due processes e.g. mining licenses to Chinese investors in protected areas such National Parks under the International Union of Conservation of Nature and its World Commission on Protected Areas. Zimbabwe violated this by granting mining prospectus licenses in the Hwange and Gonarezhou national parks.

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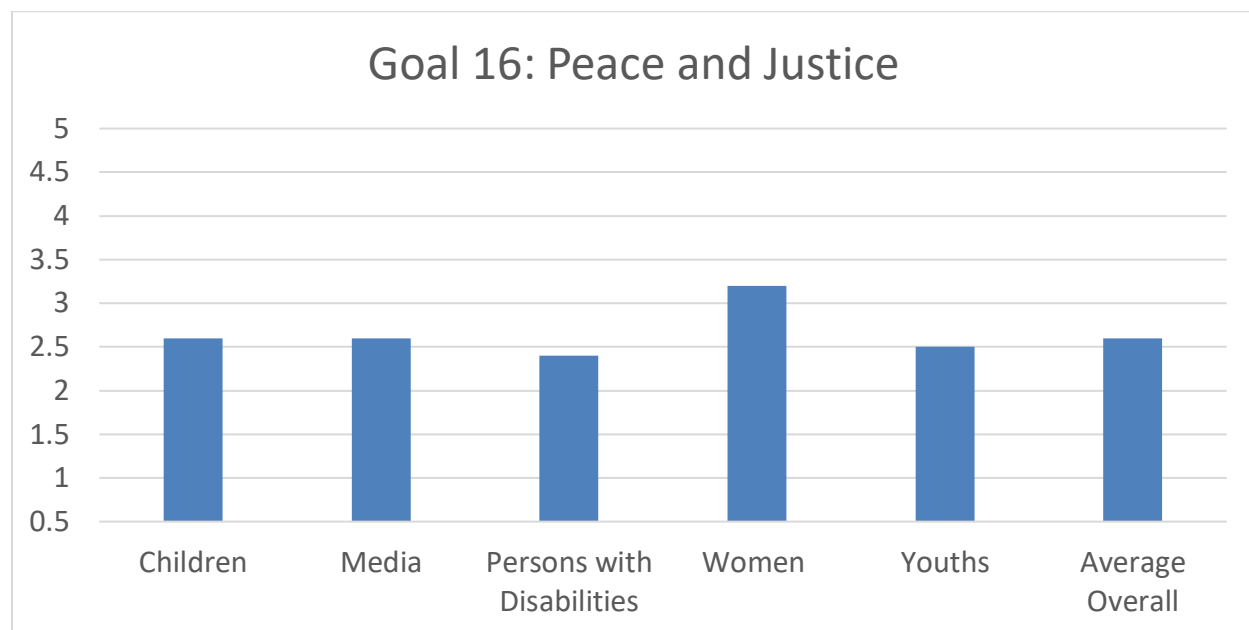
<sup>6</sup> <https://t.co/vzs7a4E2D0>

- Unregulated surface mining activities of gold and chrome are becoming the major causes of land degradation.
- Opaque deals by government officials taking advantage of communities' inabilities to organize themselves and barring of meetings during COVID-19.
- Weather variability due to climate change is another big challenge.
- Challenges with international support. The pulling out by America from the Kyoto protocol caused uncertainties including implications of funding to combat climate change.

## Recommendations

- Creation of strong institutions that is independent from government influence to enforce the legal provisions aimed at protecting the land.

**Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**



## Goal 16 Progress

- Goal 16 has an average score of 2.6 with the Women sector scoring highest with 3.2. All other sectors have score of 2.5 or above except the PWDs sector that has the least score with 2.4.
- There is some Government commitment at this level, for instance the Government has established the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) which is there to foster peace and healing. There have been marked improvements in the judicial sector with courts much more accessible to citizens thereby improving access to justice.
- The government has also established the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD), which is a multi-stakeholder grouping aimed at bridging the divide that exists on the Zimbabwean Political Landscape although there is need to broaden the platform and have all key political players on board.
- There is some progress made through the resuscitation of the Tripartite Negotiation Forum which is the National Dialogue Structure. However there seem to have been little or no progress on economic growth and this is affecting SDG 8 and 16.
- Accountability and inclusion remain key issues despite for instance the formation of the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission which is meant to deal with all forms of corruption. Corruption and cases of bribery remain very high within the country and include high profile figures who are rarely prosecuted for the crimes committed. The COVID-19 scandal in which resources were diverted by political elites paints a clear picture to the nature and scale of corruption within the government and the lack of effective institutions and mechanisms to deal with this at the source.
- Inclusion of CSOs in these spaces by the Government has been critical and will go a long way to ensure buy in or enhanced citizen participation in processes. For instance, NAYO sits within the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Sub Committee on Strategy Development and in the NPRC.
- The reform of the judicial sector has been an ongoing issue for a while now and there has been regular implementation of this which has included refurbishing of the courts, constructing courts at the local level thereby making them accessible to citizens. The NPRC and the Anti-Corruption Commission are both fairly new.



The zero tolerance to corruption campaign by the Government has not yielded much results as corruption remains high and is endemic across government departments and public service in general.

- There are concerted efforts by the Government to build citizen awareness and capacity – for instance the NPRC after forming provincial Peace committees it has been undertaking these through different capacity building sessions to build their competencies for work related to the commission's mandate. The same goes for the judicial sector and in terms of dealing with corruption as well.
- In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation these tend to be internal and Government related. On the part of civil society, insight to the big issues for instance the commission dealing with a major public corruption scandal are available but beyond that, civil society might not have access to the finer details.

## **Challenges**

- The SDG relates to hard governance issues which the state views as part of actions to effect regime change agendas. Citizen participation is in the form of alliances and networks that deal with specific issues such as debt, corruption, peace building and human rights in a broad sense. Outside of this, human rights defenders and activists also organize that such actions are met with arrest in most cases. However, occasionally, the government engages with civil society organizations on these matters.
- The majority of citizens especially the youth (as per a 2020 research by the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust) have very limited to no knowledge of the Constitution, their Rights and how to access instruments of justice.
- Involvement of PWDs in the sector is still low and there is also no inclusivity in the institutions charged with peace and justice. Access to information and awareness of legal provisions among the PWDs is low. Police reception not friendly especially related to domestic violence. People with hearing impairments are most affected because there are a few within the justice system who can do sign language.
- The use of force in maintaining peace and order and continuation of media violations is a cause for concern. The reported abductions, corruption, election and post-election disturbances, exclusion of minority groups.
- There is still limited access to media in rural and marginalised communities in Zimbabwe.

- Shrinking civic space on the rise within the country – this has had an adverse effect on the accountability role of CSOs and undertaking of actions targeted at the state to demand redress such as demonstrations.
- Proposed amendments within the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No.2 Bill narrows the space for citizen consultation, inclusive decision making and participation going forward which will have an adverse effect on the independency of a commission, the judicial sector itself and any other related institutions.

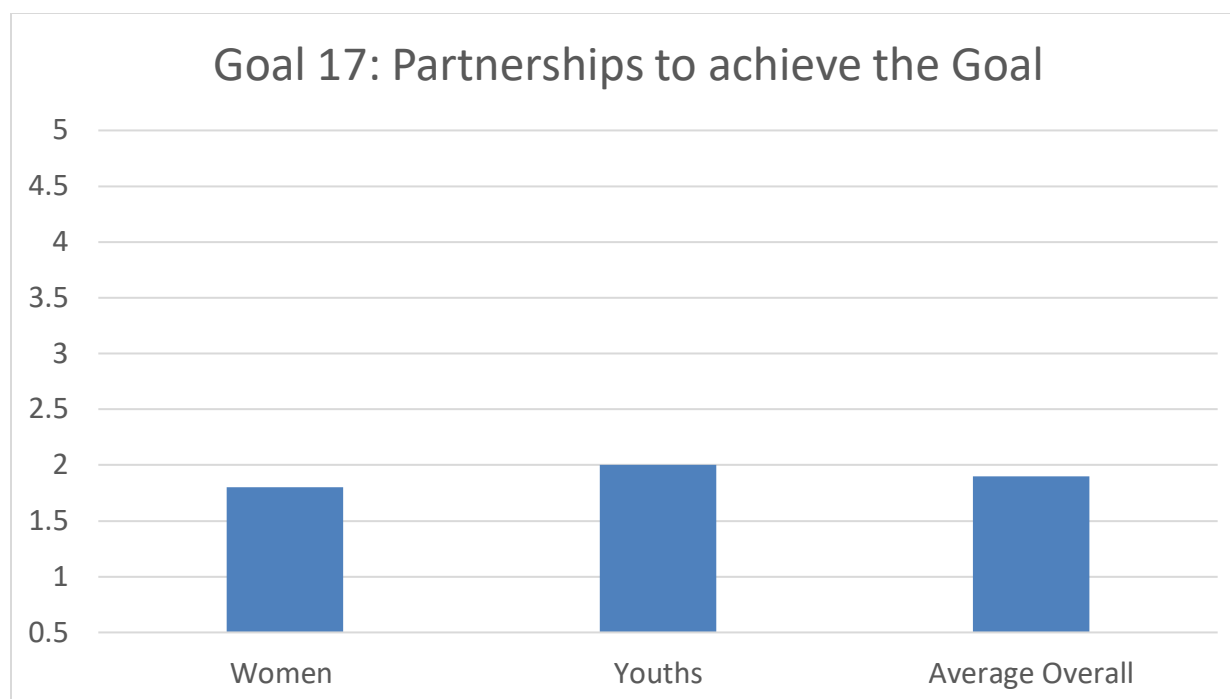
### **Impact of COVID-19**

- During lockdown courts were not functioning thereby undermining Goal 16.
- Deployment of security forces into civilian or public life to enforce the COVID -19 measures – this resulted in serious human rights violations with some of these cases reaching the attention of independent commissions e.g. ZHRC and NPRC.
- Disruption to citizen and CSO organizing due to restrictions imposed on travelling, movement and public gatherings.

### **Recommendations**

- Training of police, military and nurses on how to interact with PwDs without offending or discriminating them.
- There is need to advance peace building initiatives to incorporate everyone including the vulnerable groups.
- Peace related institutions need to be fully supported to work from home in times of pandemics or disasters.
- Co-regulation of the media in Zimbabwe.
- Prosecution of all perpetrators of media and human rights violations.
- Use of police instead of the military in maintaining lockdown regulations during pandemics such as the COVID-19.

### **Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**



### Goal 17 Progress

- Progress for Goal 17 is still low with a score of 1.9, the Youth sector ranked the goal at 2 while the Women sector adjudged progress to be at 1.8.
- Government has put in place some partnerships towards implementation of the SDGs with development partners, civil society organisations, and the private sector. The major partnership remains the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The ZUNDAF (2016-2020) supported six results areas aligned to the SDGs namely, Social Services and Protection; Poverty Reduction and Value Addition; Food and Nutrition; Gender Equality; HIV and AIDS and Public Administration and Governance. This has been largely successful and there is an attempt to include CSOs albeit in an ad hoc manner.
- The government through the SDGs coordinating ministry has put in place a SDGs coordination mechanism that include CSOs participation. However, the implementation still largely remains ad hoc.
- Zimbabwe is a signatory of the SADC, AU, UN and other various regional agreements. These have been helpful in monitoring and tracking progress as well as being conduits for official development assistance.

- Another positive is that Official Development Assistance increased during the period from an estimated US\$450.4 million in 2017 to US\$606.7 million in 2019 and US\$677.6 million in 2020.
- Some improvement have been noted in the ease of doing business of the Government with the World Bank ranking Zimbabwe among the top 20 countries that have improved the most in terms of ease of doing business reforms.
- Zimbabwe has also improved in terms of budget transparency with the Open Budget Survey of 2019 ranking Zimbabwe number three in Africa with a score of 49 out of 100 compared to the score of 23 out of 100 in 2017. However the score of 49 out of 100 is still very low and the lack of adequate budget and debt transparency is a cause for concern. Such information is key to stronger and sustainable partnerships which can drive growth and development.

## **Challenges**

- Despite the improvements in budget transparency and ease of doing business reforms, fiscal space remain constrained with the economy underperforming. Total revenue to GDP increased from 17.1% in 2016 to 21.5% in 2018 before declining to 17.5% in 2019. Tax revenue to GDP improved from 15.8% in 2016 to 21.1% in 2018 before declining to 17.3% in 2019.
- Corruption has led to massive wastage of resources which could have been invested in SDG related investment.
- Foreign direct investment increased from US\$349 million to US\$745 million in 2018 before declining to US\$280 million in 2019.
- Debt remains unsustainably high, due to the continuous accumulation of arrears, as well as expansion in domestic debt. According to the 2021 National Budget Statement, public debt was ZWL\$17 billion (46.9% of GDP) in 2018 rising to ZWL\$142.7 billion (88.1%) in 2019 and ZWL\$1.5 trillion (78.4% of GDP) in 2020 External Debt rose from about US\$7.5 billion in 2017 to US\$8 billion in 2019.
- The Constitutional Amendment Bill no. 2 aims at weakening powers of the Parliament in debt management which reduces transparency and accountability.

## **Impact of COVID-19**

- Slowed economic growth and closure of the country from any investors that might be wishing to establish business with Zimbabwe. Such plans had to wait till the lifting of the measures to contain COVID-19.
- The Auditor general's work was disadvantaged by COVID-19 but the office is quite helpful in tracking public debts and revenue.

### **Recommendations**

- Greater inclusion of the private sector in the SDGs to tap into its resource base to generate domestic resource mobilization and buy-in the strategies to achieve this by the private sector.
- Inclusive consultations and involvement of stakeholders in all stages of development from planning up to implementation.
- There is need to give feedback and updates on the progress of the projects as well as raising public awareness of government policies and programmes.
- Partnerships should give back to societies through established community institutions and proper monitoring of the projects.
- Need to institutionalize multi-stakeholder participation in the SDGs implementation with proper, oversight roles.
- There is need to operationalize the SDGs monitoring and evaluation framework that the government in partnership with the UN and CSOs has developed.

## **4.0 Conclusion**

Progress on most of the Goals reviewed remains very low making it very difficult for the country to achieve the set targets for Agenda 2030. While the country has done well in terms of putting the policy and legal framework in place for most of the goals and committing to most international agreements related to the SDGs, implementation of the policies and programmes is disappointingly very low. There is need for an improvement in the implementation of the policies and programmes put in place by the government. Greater participation by stakeholders including, Parliament, CSOs, the private sector, and citizens is required in both the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the Goals. Linking the monitoring framework in the NDS1 with SDGs monitoring and the Results Based Programme adapted by Government is critical as is inclusion of all stakeholders and regular feedback on progress. The programme based budgeting that government is

now using should be complemented by quarterly budget implementation reports with adequate information such as activities undertaken and outputs at the minimum. These will also help with improving implementation and tracking progress.

There is also need for adequate resources to the Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency (ZIMSTAT) to plug the SDGs indicators data gap and also ensure timely production of data. Government has also done well in terms of involving stakeholders in the VNR processes but there is need to institutionalize the consultation processes and have clear timelines or a calendar to allow for adequate preparation and meaningful participation of all stakeholders. The media especially the public media is also useful in raising public awareness on the SDGs. Post HLPF stakeholder feedback sessions for the government to report on outcomes of the HLPF are important to map the way forward and complete the accountability cycle.

## **5.0 Way Forward: Zimbabwe CSOs Reference Group's Commitment to the SDGs Implementation in Zimbabwe**

We acknowledge the existence of various other CSOs platforms that seek to contribute towards SDGs implementation in the country. As the Zim CSOs Reference Group on SDGs whose members include apex bodies of organizations of People with Disabilities, the Elderly, Youth, Children, Women, Church, Media and Human rights, we have built a coherent set of actions that will engage with the SDG process locally, regionally and internationally. The following key areas will be central to our work:

- SDGs Awareness Raising
- Research and Advocacy for SDGs localization
- Participatory Citizen Monitoring of SDGs implementation
- Supporting Government efforts through resource mobilization for SDGs implementation

The Zim CSOs Reference Group on SDGs will provide a collaborative and coordinated mechanism for the roll out of the SDGs process locally. The Reference Group through their membership and structures guarantee a multi-sectoral approach to working on the SDGs.

## **Annexure: List of Organisations that participated**

1. Advocates of Hope youth organization (Harare)
2. All for Climate Change
3. ARDT
4. Bulawayo Junior Council
5. Centre for Disability and Development
6. Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG)
7. Chosen Trust
8. Community empowerment trust
9. CYEDT
10. Deaf Zimbabwe Trust (DZT)
11. Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)
12. FAWEZI
13. FEMPRIST,
14. Family Orphan Care Trust (FOST)
15. FYBY
16. Girls and Women Empowerment Network,
17. Green Governance
18. HelpAge Zimbabwe
19. Imba Mukadzi
20. Katswe Sisterhood
21. Kwekwe Child Led Group
22. LEDRIZ
23. Lupane Youth for Development Trust
24. Midlands AIDS Support Organization (MASO)
25. MISA
26. Multi-Therapy
27. Mutare Junior Council
28. Mutasa Youth Forum
29. NASCOH
30. National Association of Youth Organisation (NAYO)
31. NCRS
32. NEC
33. Nkabazwe Community Radio station
34. Ntengwe for Community Development
35. Pakasipiti,
36. Penhalonga Residents Trust
37. Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT)
38. RAFTY
39. Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU)

40. RNCYPT
41. SAT,
42. SAYWHAT
43. Self Help Development Foundation
44. Sese Community Trust
45. Signs of Hope Zimbabwe Trust
46. Shamwari Yemwana Sikana (SYS)
47. Tony Wait
48. UNIZIM TRUST
49. Vision Africa
50. VU
51. WALPE
52. WCOZ
53. WELEAD TRUST
54. Women's Empowerment and Rehabilitation Trust (WERT)
55. WILSA
56. Women space Trust
57. Women's Action Group
58. World Vision
59. Youth Alive Zimbabwe (YAZ)
60. YETT
61. YIELD
62. YODAT
63. Young Entrepreneurs Trust Zimbabwe
64. Youth for Innovation Trust
65. ZELA
66. Zimbabwe Blind Women Trust
67. Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Association (ZCIEA)
68. Zimbabwe Evaluation Association
69. Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children
70. Zimbabwe Women's Bureau
71. Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building
72. ZOYIP
73. ZUNA
74. ZYWNP