

ZAMBIA – AN INTEGRATED PACKAGE OF MDG SERVICES IN EASTERN PROVINCE

United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Capital Development Fund

POVERTY REDUCTION AND MDG ACHIEVEMENT



ZAMBIA



Background

Zambia is a landlocked country with a total population of 12 million people, 45% of whom are below 15 years of age. Its ranking in the 2010 Human Development Index (HDI) was 150th of 169. Zambia is considered as a low human development country. Zambia's economic performance over the last ten years has improved substantially and has remained stable. Growth has increased from 2.2% in 1999 to 6.4% in 2009, driven by construction, mining, agriculture and service sectors such as transport and public services. Annual inflation rates have dropped from 30.1% in 2000 to 9.9% in 2009. The GDP per capita was at US\$ 1,358 in 2009 (PPP). Despite stable growth, the country's domestic revenues, as a share of GDP, have not increased as envisaged. Consequently, the expansion in public expenditures and investments necessary to achieve growth and the MDGs have been constrained.

Despite the robust and broad growth of the last 10 years, the incidence of poverty, although declining from 70% in 1991, has remained high, at 64% in 2006. Poverty rates have remained highest in rural areas (84%), where two thirds of Zambia's population resides. Hunger and poverty are exacerbated by high unemployment and/or insecure job opportunities, coupled with high food and fuel prices. The poorest population of Zambia does not have adequate access to social protection schemes, financial assets such as micro-finance, and basic vocational education and skills development opportunities. Human capabilities are further constrained by poor services delivery, especially in rural areas, relatively high HIV/AIDS incidence (at 14.3% as of 2007), and environmental degradation.

MDG Localization and Local Development Programmes

UNDP, together with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and development partners, has been supporting the government and civil society organizations in numerous initiatives at the local level.

Within the framework of the UNDP/SNV partnership, Economic Empowerment for People Living with HIV/AIDS was implemented in seven districts from 2008-2010, aiming to promote local economic development and to support income generation among the families suffering from the HIV epidemic. In Mumbwa, for example, 12 support groups (about 120 people) gained access to business development vouchers for agriculture and milling business. The newly generated small businesses have been integrated into the District Business Associations in their respective districts. Within the HIV/AIDS Decentralized Response initiative, the National AIDS Council (NAC) was set up in March 2000 to coordinate the multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS. As part of the implementation mechanism, nine provincial and 72 district HIV/AIDS task forces were set up to coordinate the response at the sub-national level. As a result, almost 90% of the districts in Zambia have functional teams and have incorporated HIV/AIDS response into their development plans and budgets. Grants provided through the initiative helped to support over 500 public, private and civil society organizations for improved advocacy, coordinated policy development and monitoring. In addition, business development services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) were established, helping expand livelihood opportunities for individuals and households affected by the pandemic.

The Micro-Finance for Poverty Reduction project (MPRP) began in 2004 in partnership with the Government of Zambia, UNDP, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the Grameen Trust, and the Government of Japan. The project was piloted in Lusaka and Chongwe. It aimed at developing an effective micro-finance model for poverty reduction in Zambia through building the capacity of local micro-finance institutions (MFIs). The project reached 3,938 women as of the end of 2008. The results demonstrated that the micro-finance model can be highly successful in reducing the vulnerability of the poor – and especially women, enabling them to use greater profits to buy food and to send their children to school. The project succeeded in mobilizing savings worth US\$ 320,000 in the poor communities (that created revolving funds to be used by communities). The Micro Bankers Trust of Zambia plans to replicate the model in other regions of the country.

Numerous complementary initiatives have supported MDG localization efforts. The Africa 2000 Network (A2N) pilot initiative supported community-led initiatives reaching out to 1,000 households (or 6,000 individuals) living in 24 villages of Chibombo and Mazabuka Districts, providing them access to information and developing their skills in animal husbandry and planting alternative drought-resistant crops, such as cassava. The Global Environmental Facility's (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) initiative in Zambia financed community-based groups to promote economic development while protecting the environment in the Mambwe, Chibombo, Lundazi, Serenje and Mumbwa Districts. The main beneficiary, the Community Marketing and Conservation (COMACO), implemented projects aimed at income generation, biodiversity conservation and food security in Zambia's Luangwa Valley. In addition to helping farmers produce eco-friendly food products, it also supported innovative initiatives such as the exchange of guns and other tools used in poaching for the tools and training necessary for engaging in sustainable agriculture. Participating families have seen a 15% increase in food security and a doubling of their incomes, while the area has experienced a corresponding resurgence in lion and elephant populations.

Opportunities for Scaling Up

Based on the experiences and lessons learned from the existing local development initiatives described above, UNDP, in collaboration with the Government of Zambia, has launched the project Localization of the MDGs in Petauke District-Eastern Province. This initiative targets the Petauke District of the Eastern Province with a population of 348,681 (58,114 households). It is one of the poorest districts in Zambia, with a poverty rate of 69% and infant and under-five mortality rates at 80 and 127 per 1,000 live births, respectively.

The project aims at contributing to the Government's efforts to reduce extreme poverty and food insecurity and to mitigate the negative impact of HIV/AIDS and climate change among targeted vulnerable households living in Petauke District. The project will achieve this by facilitating accelerated progress in MDGs 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8, focusing on localization of the MDGs at the community level and thereby responding directly to the needs of the poor. Investments envisaged include: the provision of funds and access to financial services for the poor, especially PLHIV; access to HIV/AIDS continuum care and support services; grants for the diversification of livelihoods; and the creation of 'green' job opportunities, such as eco-tourism, the development of natural food products (e.g., honey), high-value crop production (sunflowers,

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACHIEVING THE MDGS:

Zambia is divided into nine provinces and 72 districts. Currently, the country has a dual-local government system, with elected governments and extension departments of sectoral ministries. The approval of the Decentralization Implementation Plan will move Zambia toward a devolved local government system by 2013. This means that all sectoral extensions at the district level will become part of the local government structure. Today, sectoral agents at the local level are responsible for the provision of services such as health, education, water and sanitation. Under the new Decentralization Implementation plan, local authorities will become the party primarily responsible for local economic development and the provision of all basic infrastructure and service delivery.

Local authorities have limited power for generating local revenues, and the recent decision of the central government to curtail some revenue sources that previously benefited local authorities has further exacerbated this handicap. Currently, the central government provides only 3% of local authority. The newly established inter-governmental transfer system has not been effective, being marked by significant delays in disbursement. This poses significant challenges to the effective planning and implementation of local development projects.

nuts, etc.), food processing, and the provision of low cost technologies such as fuel-efficient stoves to reduce indoor pollution. At the institutional level, the project supports the further capacity development of local authorities, micro-finance institutions, and innovative approaches to promote low-cost and locally appropriate technologies for improved environmental management. The initiative will also support implementation of the new decentralization policy to be approved in 2011 and provide support to local authorities to plan, budget and implement local MDG-based development strategies.



Photo by Elizabeth Perry/UNDP

The project is deemed to be rapidly scalable due to the existing capacities and opportunities on the ground. It will be executed nationally through the Ministry of Community Development (MCDSS). The Ministry has subcontracted a consortium of NGOs and CSOs (AMICAALL, Keeper Zambia, Africa2000Network, Small Grants, and Micro Bankers Trust) that already have programmes on the ground in Petauke. The District Council and the MCDSS district officials are responsible for ensuring scale-up of the project at the community level and have already identified key partners. The UNCT will build on the synergies and positive lessons learnt from UN-supported interventions, such as the participatory planning and the provision of the integrated and holistic package of services.