In support of the Government of Zambia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has embarked on the implementation of a five-year Country Programme Document (CPD) 2023-2027. UNDP works with the Government and people of Zambia to achieve the Vision 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementation of National Development Plans. UNDP focuses on areas that have a multiplier effect through a targeted build-up of capacities, policies, the creation of dialogue space, and scalable downstream interventions. Proposed downstream interventions seek to provide platforms for citizen engagement in democratic processes and facilitate access to skills, knowledge and new technologies for increased income generation.

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in some 177 countries and territories, we offer a global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

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Report compiled by the UNDP Zambia Communications Unit and the Monitoring and Evaluations Team
A Glimpse of Zambia

Population
Zambia's population has been growing steadily over the years. Current population is 19.6 million (10 million women and 9.6 million men). 46% of Zambians are under the age of 35, women make up over 50% of the population, and 60% of Zambians live in poverty. The current life expectancy is 63.9 years. The literacy rate is 81.55.

Economy
Zambia has abundant natural mineral resources, which have been the main drivers of its economy. Its main exports are copper, cobalt, gold and maize. The country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is approximately USD 23.3 billion with a GDP growth rate of 5.7%. The average income per capita is USD 1,430, with an unemployment rate of 13.8%. The inflation rate is 13.2%
As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2023, I am proud to present this annual report, themed ‘Empowering Zambia’s Development Progress.’ This theme resonates deeply with our unwavering commitment to supporting Zambia’s journey towards sustainable development and prosperity.

Throughout this report, you will discover the impactful initiatives and partnerships that have driven progress in key areas, from promoting climate resilience and green growth to fostering inclusive economic development and social justice. Our work has been guided by the principles of empowerment, recognizing that the power to shape a better future lies in the hands of the Zambian people.

As we celebrate our achievements, we also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. We remain steadfast in our dedication to supporting the Government of Zambia, civil society, and the private sector in addressing the complex development challenges facing the country.

Our priorities for the year 2024 include scaling up climate resilience and adaptation efforts, enhancing inclusive governance and human rights, and supporting economic growth and diversification. We remain committed to empowering Zambia’s development progress and creating a prosperous and resilient future for all.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to our partners, colleagues, and the people of Zambia for their tireless efforts and unwavering support. Together, we are empowering Zambia’s development progress and shaping a brighter future for all.

James Wakiaga

Resident Representative
UNDP Zambia

We are delighted to share the 2023 UNDP Zambia Annual Report, a testament to our dedication to driving sustainable development in Zambia.”
2023 in Figures

Numbers Tell Our Story

87% alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP)

Enhanced resilience through conservation agriculture and production for over 100,000 small-holder farmers

8,011 women and 1,133 men survivors of GBV provided with integrated GBV services in 5 Village-Led and Anti-GBV

2,375 traditional leaders and authority figures trained on GBV prevention and risk mitigation

Supporting 7.4 million people to participate in elections

Birth registration rates from 14.3% to 84% as of 2023

18.6 million of public and private finance for the SDGs raised against a target of $18.4 million

500 (60% women) Artisanal Small-Scale Miners (ASMEs) benefited from income-generating activities in the mining sector

Helping 1.8 million people to escape out of multidimensional poverty

Increased access to climate information for 295,028 (48% women, 52% men) small-holder farmers
Strengthening Capacities in Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Resilience

We are working towards building healthier ecosystems, increased resilience for all, including the marginalized and vulnerable, and sustainable natural resource management for a more equitable and climate-resilient future.

PROTECTING NATURE, ENHANCING LIVELIHOODS

In reducing the carbon sink while contributing to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through the reduction of deforestation and environmental degradation,

UNDP Zambia, through the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre GDP-UNDP-HQ initiative, supported the Ministry of Green Economy & Environment in the following ways.

- Developing a gender-responsive community forest management project in Kasempa, Northwestern Province, and Kazungula, Southern Province.
- Promoted reduction of environmental degradation, sustainable gender-responsive natural resource management, and encouraged waste reuse and recycling.
- Mobilised a seed fund to propel the country towards scaled-up interventions in the forest sector to reduce deforestation and increase the carbon sink while contributing to the country’s NDCs through this initiative.

Further, traditional gatekeepers were supported in participating at the Traditional Leaders Caucus at the 2023 Environmental Protection Dialogue, where their capacity for implementation of environmental and climate change programs within their communities were sharpened to integrate sustainable resource management in local development plans in the light of the decentralization and devolution agenda.

POWERING PROGRESS WITH CLEAN ENERGY

Through tireless resource mobilization efforts, UNDP has successfully secured funding for three critical energy-based projects: Solar for Health, Africa Mini-Grids, and Productive Use of Energy. These initiatives, aimed at promoting renewable energy in vital development sectors, are set to commence implementation this year.
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The Solar for Health project will harness the power of solar energy to strengthen healthcare systems, while the Africa Mini-Grids project will expand access to electricity through innovative mini-grid solutions. Meanwhile, the Productive Use of Energy project will unlock the potential of renewable energy to drive economic growth and productivity.

These projects demonstrate UNDP’s unwavering commitment to mobilizing resources and scaling up innovative solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. By leveraging partnerships and resources, we can accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

In mitigating climate change effects, 20% of GRZ officers drawn from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA), Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD), and communities in 16 districts, were capacity strengthened in Climate resilience and disaster risk management strategies. This training included the application of crop yield prediction tools on Climate information services to mitigate the adverse effects of climate-induced hazards.

ZMD was supported to facilitate the generation, interpretation, and dissemination of climate information that resulted in the production of the timely 2023/24 weather forecast. As a result, weather advisories disseminated benefited over 1 million smallholder farmers in 16 districts and enhanced their capacity to plan for and manage water resources to support resilient agricultural production. Further in supporting alternative livelihoods to agriculture, 500 small-scale farmers were capacity built in apiculture across 10 districts. Additionally, 1,905 farmers were empowered with honey processing equipment to help improve the quality of honey products for increased income.
Building Inclusive Economic Diversification and Growth

In striving to create a Zambia where all people can prosper in a dynamic, resilient, and sustainable economy, characterized by equal access to quality jobs, livelihoods, and business opportunities that promote economic justice and human flourishing, the following initiatives were implemented.

**DATA-DRIVEN SDG POLICY FOR EQUITABLE**

UNDP-designed assessment tools such as the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) were used to evaluate the 8th NDP’s alignment with the SDGs. The assessment revealed an impressive 87% alignment, demonstrating significant progress towards achieving the SDGs. This activity was done under the hospices of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (FNP) as a collaborative effort.

The Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS), a groundbreaking initiative providing critical insights to inform policy interventions aimed at accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was launched. The LCMS has been instrumental in tracking trends in various measures of social well-being over time, shedding light on the living conditions of Zambians and identifying areas that require targeted interventions. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the social and economic landscape, the LCMS is empowering policymakers to make data-driven decisions with the potential to help bridge the gap in living standards and promote a more equitable and prosperous society for all.

Successfully launched the 2022 Human Development Report (HDR), a comprehensive and authoritative publication that serves as a vital resource for informing SDG planning and implementation, providing valuable insights and data to drive progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**INNOVATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY**

With the support of Copperbelt University (CBU) a University Innovation Pod (UniPod) was established, this aims at bolstering the capacities of public universities to respond with comprehensive and inclusive strategies to foster the growth of innovations for entrepreneurship, livelihoods, and income generation. A public-private sector platform to mobilize additional technical and financial resources has been established to ensure the sustainable development of innovations for SDG acceleration at the UniPod.

Members of the Unipod Steering Committee undertook a benchmarking South-to-South trip to Rwanda for shared learning. Lessons learned helped to strengthen linkages between the Unipod, academia, and industry for a more collaborative approach to MSME support.

To facilitate the empowerment of 9 innovative entrepreneurs (6 men, 3 women) identified under the National Innovation Initiatives (NII) comprehensive support, including technical research, mentorship, and financial backing was provided. This holistic approach enabled them to refine their innovations, enhance their viability, and create employment opportunities, particularly for other young individuals. By fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, we are helping to drive economic growth, reduce youth unemployment, and promote sustainable development. Zambia’s current youth unemployment levels remain at a staggering 7.92%.
EMPOWERING YOUTH, ENERGIZING AFRICA

In 2023, UNDP Zambia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Arts, supported the participation of 8 young Zambian innovators and entrepreneurs in the YouthConnekt Africa Summit in Kenya. This pan-African platform, initiated by President Kagame of Rwanda and UNDP, brought together over 20,000 young innovators and entrepreneurs from 32 countries to empower them with information, skills, experiences, and networks. Under the theme “Youth Innovating a Borderless African Renaissance”, the Zambian delegation connected with youth, youth Ministries, and businesses from across Africa, facilitating exchanges of experiences and ideas. This opportunity enhanced efforts by the Ministry and partners to address youth unemployment, job creation, sports, and creative arts programs in Zambia. Through this partnership, UNDP Zambia reaffirms its commitment to supporting youth empowerment and development, leveraging innovative platforms like YouthConnekt to unlock the potential of young Zambians and promote sustainable growth and prosperity for all.

In line with this commitment, a rural Youth Resource Centre in Mufumbwe (680 Km from the capital Lusaka) was rehabilitated into a learning hub, for empowering young people with the digital skills and resources needed to succeed. 30 laptops, 30 desktops, and comprehensive training for 10 staff members (4 men, 6 women), enhancing their vocational training expertise were provided. As a result, the center is now better positioned to support the establishment and growth of youth-owned Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth among young people in the country.

Collaboration efforts with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning with technical expertise and funding facilitated the completion of the Development Finance Assessment (DFA), slated for release in early 2024. This comprehensive analysis will offer valuable insights into the country’s financial ecosystem and identify both domestic and international resources, providing a roadmap for strategic planning and informed decision-making.

Furthermore, policy actors from the government received financial support to attend the global conference on ‘Public Finance for Inclusive and Sustainable Development’. This conference brought together over a hundred representatives from Ministries of Finance, Parliaments, tax administrations, civil society, and international partners to share expertise, identify best practices, and develop strategies for enhancing budgeting and fiscal policy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conference outlined pathways for capacity building and integrated approaches to public finance, supporting the successful implementation of the SDGs.

We believe that young people must be equipped with skills and knowledge to shape a cleaner, greener, more climate resilient future. This event today is important in ensuring that young people gain and apply skills that will enable them to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development in Mufumbwe and Zambia at large”

— Beatrice Mutali, UN Resident Coordinator
Technical support was offered to the Government to develop the National Electronic Government Plan (NeGP) which will help transform the public sector through the adoption and application of digital technologies, contributing to the overall national aspiration of transforming Zambia into a Digital Economy as espoused in the 8NDP.

Zambia has made significant strides in improving birth registration rates, ensuring more children can exercise their right to legal identity. Through the UNDP- and partners-supported Integrated National Registration Information System (INRIS) and decentralized birth registration processes, 79 out of 116 districts have been covered. The Births and Deaths Registration Act was also reviewed to align with the Children's Code Act, clarifying the Ministry of Health's role in notifying births in health facilities. These efforts aim to increase birth registration coverage from 14% to 50% by 2026. Notably, a total of 157,766 children under 5 years old (78,879 boys and 78,887 girls) out of a target of 498,394 have been registered and issued certificates through mobile birth registration in health facilities in two districts and routine registration using INRIS.

To mitigate electoral violence which largely keeps away women from participating in elections, the Early Warning and Early Response System (EWERS) was established with the support of UNDP and the Human Rights Commission (HRC). This innovative system has been actualized through the training of 232 community-based human rights champions across 10 provinces, who have learned to utilize the i-report platform integrated into EWERS. This has significantly bolstered the system's capacity for data collection and analysis, enabling community champions to play a vital role in monitoring and responding to human rights violations. By facilitating informed and timely responses, EWERS will effectively aid conflict management during electoral processes, promoting peaceful and inclusive democratic practices.

For enhanced participation of Zambians in electoral processes, the government has established and launched the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), with the support of UNDP and cooperation partners. This strategic initiative aims to facilitate the effective implementation of election observer mission recommendations, ensuring a more inclusive and transparent electoral process. The IAWG will provide expert advice and monitoring, tracking progress and promoting collaborative efforts to strengthen the country's democratic governance.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) was supported in understanding Voter Turnout and Rejected Ballots for the 2021 General Elections through research. The study aimed at identifying trends in voter turnout and rejected ballot papers, to inform future decisions of the ECZ to enhance voter turnout and reduce rejected ballots in upcoming elections. These insights are expected to contribute to improved electoral processes by increasing voter participation.
RESPONSES TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Bold efforts have been invested in combating gender-based violence (GBV), a pervasive global issue, that has not spared Zambia. Collaborative efforts with stakeholders led by UNDP have seen the country develop policies and guidelines to enhance prevention and response mechanisms to GBV. GBV has been successfully mainstreamed into policy instruments and essential tools, through the UNDP-led GRZ-UN Joint Programme on GBV Phase II developed such as:

- Minimum Standards for Shelters, ensuring standardized operations in safe shelters.
- Prosecutors Handbook Guidelines on the Protection of Child Victims and Witnesses
- Anti-GBV Act Guidelines for operationalization of the GBV Fund
- Community Savings Groups Manual

Notably, the development of the Prosecutors’ Handbook on GBV, supported by UNODC, coupled with capacity-building initiatives has led to improved disposal of GBV cases and empowered judicial officers to timely deliver justice to GBV survivors.

Further, the program has achieved significant milestones. Among them; the establishment of six Anti-GBV Fast Track Courts, the country’s first Forensic DNA Lab, temporary safe shelters, and One Stop Centers. These innovative centers have proven effective in promoting community involvement in ensuring the attainment of gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment, aligning with citizen aspirations and SDGs. Notably, six Village-Led One Stop Centers are now operational in four provinces: Central, Eastern, Muchinga, and Northern. Additionally, a comprehensive study on Online GBV among women and girls in Zambia has been completed, providing valuable insights to inform interventions. Furthermore, in collaboration with the GRZ, UNDP supported the development of a report on Cyberbullying and its effects on women and girls in Zambia, building on existing policies, laws, and regulations on online GBV. The report also highlighted a significant gender divide in mobile phone usage, with males at 57.3% and females at 47.4%. These findings will inform women’s economic empowerment initiatives, promoting greater gender equality and reducing the gender and literacy divide in ICT usage.
At UNDP Zambia, we recognize the critical importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment in achieving sustainable development and human rights. Our goal is to promote gender parity and challenge harmful gender stereotypes, ensuring that women and girls have equal opportunities to participate in political, economic, and social spheres. In 2023 significant strides were made as follows:

The country office successfully underwent the rigorous Gender Seal certification process, achieving the bronze standard, with sights set on gold certification. This milestone has galvanized our office to strive for excellence in gender equality and inclusion, building on the insightful self-assessment conducted during the certification process. The assessment revealed areas for improvement, which we are now addressing with renewed commitment and dedication, driving meaningful change, and fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

In supporting the engendering of the Zambia Police Service (ZPS), a comprehensive Gender Workplace Policy, aimed at addressing the alarming rates of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) cases within the ZPS’s development was facilitated. This policy was successfully rolled out and disseminated across all 10 provinces, promoting a safer and more inclusive work environment. Additionally, UNDP provided technical assistance to the Electoral Commission of Zambia in crafting a groundbreaking Gender Policy, designed to ensure gender equality, inclusivity, and diversity throughout the electoral process, paving the way for a more representative and equitable democracy.

To tackle the persistent challenge of low female representation in elections UNDP has joined forces with civil society organizations (CSOs) to champion a gender transformative approach: advocating for affirmative action within political parties to increase the nomination and election of women candidates within political parties. This collaborative effort aims to break down gender barriers, empower women to take on leadership roles and ensure that diverse perspectives are represented in the political arena, ultimately strengthening democracy, and promoting inclusive decision-making.
Despite the boom in the information revolution in the mid-1990s which cascaded to Zambia too, the digital divide remains wide between the urban and rural areas in Zambia.

In responding to this need UNDP supported the Zambia Information Communications Authority (ZICTA) in establishing of an ICT Hub at Chongwe Secondary School, in Chongwe District, a rural town near Lusaka. This initiative aims to empower rural women and girls by providing access to technology and educational resources as an enabler.

The UNDP has also set up ICT Hubs in Chisamba and Itezhi-Tezhi Districts to provide platforms for rural women and girls to access reliable information and unlock new opportunities for empowerment.

With the proliferation of mobile phones and internet connectivity, women and girls can now access educational resources and training programs remotely, enhancing their skills and pursuing market linkages.

In Western Zambia, the Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II (SCRALA) project is making a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable smallholder farmers. One beneficiary is Nanswau Samisis, a single mother of four from the village of Sabazibe in Mulobezi District. Nanswau’s story is a testament to the project’s effectiveness.

Before joining the SCRALA project, Nanswau faced significant challenges in providing for her family. Her small-scale farming efforts were frequently hampered by climate-related issues such as drought and flash floods. This resulted in food insecurity for her children and hampered their education due to a leaky thatched roof and damp household items.

In 2023, Nanswau was selected to participate in the SCRALA project. This initiative, implemented by the Zambian Government with funding from the Green Climate Fund and support from UNDP, FAO, and WFP, specifically targets vulnerable smallholder farmers, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. It aims to reach over one million people, including 940,000 farmers, and provides comprehensive support throughout the agricultural value chain.

Nanswau benefited from the project’s pass-on mechanism, receiving five goats initially and later passing on five to another farmer while keeping 15. By selling five goats for 4,000 Zambian Kwacha (approximately US$197.02), she was able to renovate her house with iron roofing. With this new source of income, Nanswau expanded her livelihood by rearing village chickens and cultivating vegetables. She now owns over 20 chickens and earns approximately ZMW 400 per month (around US$18.63) from vegetable sales. Her household’s financial stability has improved, and she can now afford three meals a day for her family. As a result, her children’s school attendance has significantly improved, leading to better academic performance.
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is committed to supporting the Government of Zambia in achieving its national development aspirations, as outlined in the 8th National Development Plan, the Zambia Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At UNDP Zambia, we recognize that addressing complex development challenges requires a collaborative and multifaceted approach, engaging diverse stakeholders from various sectors. Our partnerships enhance program implementation, foster innovation, facilitate resource mobilization, and improve program quality, yielding added value that would be unattainable alone. Partnerships are integral to our program and project implementation, as the most pressing challenges demand collective efforts from various stakeholders working together to improve the lives of the Zambian people.

In April 2023, COMESA and UNDP launched a strategic partnership in Lusaka, Zambia to address Africa’s development challenges. The partnership aims to enhance regional integration and drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP is committed to leveraging strategic partnerships to support Africa’s development agenda and has secured essential financing partnerships to advance democratic governance, economic development, and social and human development.

Our partnerships drive our efforts to achieve a sustainable future for all Zambians and for the planet.
UNDP Zambia continued to deliver development results, leveraging its expertise, partnerships, and resources to drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our operations and resource mobilization efforts focused on:

**Programme Implementation**
We implemented a range of projects across our focus areas, including sustainable livelihoods, climate resilience, governance, and gender equality. Our programs reached over 1 million beneficiaries, with a focus on marginalized communities.

**Partnerships**
We strengthened our partnerships with government, civil society, and private sector entities, fostering collaborative approaches to development challenges.

**Efficiency and Effectiveness**
We continued to enhance our operational efficiency, implementing cost-saving measures and streamlining processes to maximize our impact.

**Innovative Financing**
We explored innovative financing mechanisms, including impact investing and blended finance, to unlock new resources for development.

**Resource Mobilisation**
We mobilized over USD 23 million in funding, an 8% increase from 2022, thanks to the support of our development partners, including governments, multilateral agencies, and private sector entities.

**Resources Mobilised and Utilised in 2023**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Thematic Area</th>
<th>2023 Delivery Target</th>
<th>2023 Expenditure</th>
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<td>Environment and Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive Growth</td>
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<td>Strategic Policy</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19,594,311.00</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
As we reflect on our journey in 2023, we acknowledge the complex development landscape that UNDP Zambia navigated. Despite notable achievements, our efforts were not without challenges. We faced hurdles that tested our resilience, adaptability, and creativity. In this section, we share the challenges we encountered and the reflections we drew from our experiences, highlighting areas for improvement and opportunities for growth.

**Challenges**

**Limited Financial Resources**
Despite efforts to mobilize resources, UNDP Zambia faced funding constraints, impacting the scale and scope of projects.

**Climate Change**
The increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters posed significant challenges to development efforts.

**Inequality and Marginalized Groups**
Reaching and empowering marginalized communities, including women and youth, remained a persistent challenge.

**Reflections**

**Strongened Partnerships**
UNDP Zambia fostered robust partnerships with government, civil society, and private sector entities, enhancing project impact and sustainability.

**Innovative Solutions**
The country office successfully piloted innovative approaches, such as UNIPOD and digitalization, to address development challenges.

**Community Engagement**
UNDP Zambia prioritized community-led initiatives, ensuring that local voices and needs drove development interventions.

**Capacity Building Successes**
Notable progress was made in building capacities of local institutions, enhancing their ability to drive development efforts.

**Resilience and Adaptability**
The country office demonstrated agility in responding to emerging challenges, ensuring the continuity of critical development projects.