

Implementation of SDGs in Zambia and Progress toward Achievement

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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are common, universal goals for member states of the United Nations to transform the world into a fairer, more prosperous and peaceful society by 2030.

They were adopted in September 2015 as successors to the Millennium Goals.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their 169 targets, and these form the core of the 2030 Agenda.

They balance the economic, social and ecological dimensions of sustainable development. With the SDGs, all states, not only developing countries, are called upon to end poverty, achieve gender equality, improve health and education ***make cities more sustainable, combat climate change, protect forests and much more***. In addition, incentives are to be created to encourage non-governmental actors to make an increasingly active contribution to sustainable development.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are as follows:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Wellbeing
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry and Innovation
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life On Land
16. Peace and Justice
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Introduction

Zambia being a member state of the United Nations and a state party to the Sustainable Development Goals considered the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a national agenda. It was the basis upon Zambia's Vision 2030 was formulated.

The government considered Sustainable Development a constitutional issue and it was incorporated in the national values and principles in the 2016 Amended Constitution as a guide in the national decision-making on the development.

Further, the SDGs were mainstreamed into Zambia's development plans, (7NDP and now 8NDP)

The government also put Sustainable Development at the centre stage in the development of policies and strategies in its economic and social policies that were developed since the adoption of the SDGs.

Introduction

In domesticating the SDGs through institutional, policy and legislative processes, and in the planning and implementation processes, the following key policy and legislative documents were used:

- 1. National Planning and Budgeting Act** – this provided a framework within which the budgetary allocations can be aligned towards meeting the goals. Conscious of the fact that all the sectors in the budget such as health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture etc. contribute to the SDGs
- 2. Parliamentary Oversight on Loan Contraction** – taking cognizant of the fact that debt has a direct relationship to the country's ability to meet its budgetary obligations for achieving the goals.

Introduction

3. Access to Information Bill, which is instrumental in ensuring transparency and accountability in allocation, disbursement and utilization of resources as well as the implementation of activities for achieving the SDGs.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, which is aimed at improving program efficiency and effectiveness and enhancing the achievement of the SDGs.

5. The Zambian Parliament has been active in promoting discussions of the SDG agenda and raising SDG knowledge among parliamentarians, so that this information can be disseminated to the constituencies.

6. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has played a role in monitoring and auditing the SDG process. So far the AG's office carried out an audit of Zambia's preparedness for the SDGs and recommended required actions.

Key recommendations and lessons from audit were:

1. There was need for the strengthening of the national statistics system at both the national and sub-national levels. This would enable realistic planning and ensuring that adequate goods and services are available for citizens.
2. There is need for the costing of SDG implementation, in order to inform resource mobilization strategies.
3. There is a need for expediting the implementation of Output Based Budgeting; and
4. There is a need for enhancing implementation of the National Planning and Budgeting Act.

Performance Assessment



At the international level eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. While the number of people living in extreme poverty dropped by more than half between 1990 and 2015, too many are still struggling for the most basic human needs. This is mainly affected by high unemployment, poor livelihoods (including low agricultural output) and high commodity prices. In Zambia, computed statistics on headcount multi-dimensional poverty showed a reduction from 50% in 2016 to 44% in 2020.

In rural areas, multidimensional poverty declined from 69% in 2016 to 59% in 2020 while in urban areas, poverty declined from 25% to 18% respectively. Although declining, rural poverty has remained high. The sustainability of social protection programmes is threatened, especially with the slow pace of beneficiary graduation and the increasing cost of living, among others.

Performance Assessment



At the global level number of undernourished people has dropped by almost half in the past two decades because of rapid economic growth and increased agricultural productivity. Many developing countries that used to suffer from famine and hunger can now meet their nutritional needs. Unfortunately, extreme hunger and malnutrition remain a huge barrier to development in many countries.

Nutritional status is closely associated with stunting levels, where Zambia recorded a reduction from 53% in 2001-2002 to 35% in 2018. The prevalence of stunting was higher among children in rural areas (36%) than among children in urban areas (32%). Similarly, the level of underweight children declined from 23% in 2001-2002 to 12% in 2018. The prevalence of underweight was higher among children in rural areas (12.4%) than among children in urban areas (10.8%). However the increasing cost of living as well as the high food prices could negatively affect the efforts towards achieving this goal.

Performance Assessment



World wide there has been great progress against several leading causes of death and disease. Life expectancy has increased dramatically; infant and maternal mortality rates have declined, the tide on HIV has turned and malaria deaths have halved. But the world is off-track to achieve the health-related SDGs. Progress has been uneven, both between and within countries.

In Zambia maternal mortality decline from 591 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007 to 398 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013/2014 and 278 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018. Infant mortality had also declined from 45 deaths per 1,000 livebirths in 2013/2014 to 42 deaths per 1,000 live births to in 2018. Infant mortality is slightly higher in urban areas (44 deaths per 1,000 live births) than in rural areas (41 deaths per 1,000 live births). However, neonatal mortality increased slightly from 24 to 27 per 1,000 live births between 2013-2014 and 2018. In terms of disease burden, malaria continues being the major cause of morbidity and mortality.

Performance Assessment



Since 2000, there has been enormous progress in achieving the target of universal primary education. The total enrolment rate in developing regions reached 91% in 2015, and the worldwide number of children out of school has dropped by almost half. There has also been a dramatic increase in literacy rates, and many more girls are in school than ever before. These are all remarkable successes.

Progress has however been tough in some developing regions due to high levels of poverty, armed conflicts and other emergencies.

A number of strides have been made in enhancing access and quality of education and skills development in Zambia, especially with the coming in of the “new dawn” government. The UPND government reintroduced the free education policy up to the secondary school level, and provided for secondary school boarding and skills development bursaries. Despite the recruitment of over 30,000 teachers the pupil to teacher ratio, which spiked after the implementation of the free education policy, is still high. There is need to sustain this positive scenario by ensuring funding for continued teacher recruitment as well as school infrastructure.

Performance Assessment



Globally there has been remarkable progress towards gender equality in the past 20 years. There are more girls in school now compared to 15 years ago, and most regions have reached gender parity in primary education.

But although there are more women than ever in the labour market, there are still large inequalities in some regions, with women systematically denied the same work rights as men. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office all remain huge barriers.

In Zambia, the proportion of seats held by women in parliament, in cabinet and other leadership positions continues to be low, even though there has been an increase in the proportion of local government seats held by women since 2019. Challenges include lack of gender-disaggregated data for planning, monitoring and evaluation; difficulties of enforcing statutory law in a traditional setting; and persistent low representation of women in leadership. The low representation in decision means that women's views and needs are less likely to be considered in major decisions.

Performance Assessment



Safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 requires investment in adequate infrastructure, provision of sanitation facilities, and encouraging hygiene. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems is also essential.

Ensuring universal safe and affordable drinking water involves reaching over 800 million people who lack basic services and improving accessibility and safety of services for over two billion.

In Zambia, 72% of households have access to an improved water source, although access is more predominant in urban (92%) than rural (58%) households. One third of the population has access to basic sanitation services, 41% in urban areas and 28% in rural areas. Fifty-four percent of households have access to an improved sanitation facility, with the most commonly used facility being a pit latrine with a slab (37%). Poor sanitation facilities entails open defecation and pollution of rivers and other water sources

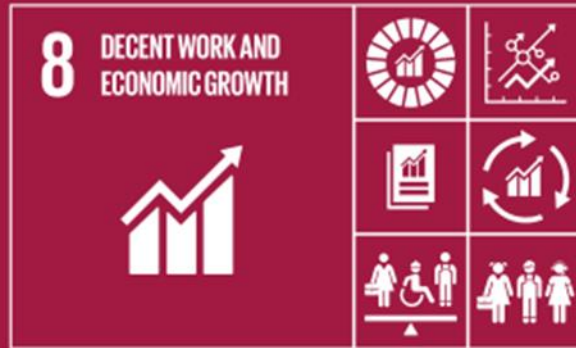
Performance Assessment



Between 2000 and 2018, the number of people with electricity globally increased from 78% to 90%, and the numbers without electricity dipped to 789 million. Yet as the population continues to grow, so will the demand for cheap energy, and an economy reliant on fossil fuels is creating drastic changes to our climate. Investing in solar, wind and thermal power, improving energy productivity, and ensuring energy for all is vital if we are to achieve SDG 7 by 2030. Expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to provide clean and more efficient energy in all countries will encourage growth and help the environment.

In Zambia, the mining sector continued to be the major consumer of electricity generated (50%), with domestic use accounting for 30%, with all other categories using 20%. By 2018, only one third (32.8%) of the country had access to electricity (from 27.9% in 2013). A need for further diversification of energy sources is needed, and the impact of climate change poses challenges for the sector. There is also a need for scaling up interventions to further improve the energy mix is needed.

Performance Assessment



Over the past 25 years the number of workers living in extreme poverty has declined dramatically in the world, despite the lasting impact of the 2008 economic crisis and global recession. In developing countries, the middle class now makes up more than 34% of total employment – a number that has almost tripled between 1991 and 2015.

However, as the global economy continues to recover there is slower growth, widening inequalities, and not enough jobs to keep up with a growing labour force. According to the International Labour Organization, more than 204 million people were unemployed in 2015.

According to the 2018 Labor Force Survey, the unemployment rate in Zambia was reported at 10.5% for males and 12.9% for females. Job creation is at the core of the 8NDP and the Government has been implementing strategies for job creation, with a focus on the youth.

Performance Assessment



Investment in infrastructure and innovation are crucial drivers of economic growth and development. With over half the world population now living in cities, mass transport and renewable energy are becoming ever more important, as are the growth of new industries and information and communication technologies.

More than 4 billion people still do not have access to the Internet, and 90% are from the developing world. Bridging this digital divide is crucial to ensure equal access to information and knowledge, as well as foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

After launching the Industrialisation Policy in 2018, Zambia has constructed multi-facility economic zones and industrial parks, which are aimed at attracting both local and foreign direct investment, achieve industrialisation and generate employment opportunities.

Challenges identified include the limited local capacity to design climate-smart infrastructure. It was noted that transport infrastructure is heavily biased to roads, with very little investment in rail transport.

Performance Assessment



Income inequality is on the rise. The richest 10% have up to 40% of global income whereas the poorest 10% earn only between 2 to 7%. If we take into account population growth inequality in developing countries, inequality has increased by 11%.

Income inequality has increased in nearly everywhere in recent decades, but at different speeds.

The World Bank ranks Zambia among the countries with the highest levels of poverty and inequality globally, but the problem is not widely studied. Zambia experiences high inequality with a Gini coefficient level of 0.6 as of 2020. Efforts need to be put in place in order to address these inequalities and achieve SDG goal number 10

Performance Assessment



Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires the world to urgently reduce its ecological footprint by changing the way goods, services and resources are produced and consumed. Agriculture is the biggest user of water worldwide, and irrigation now claims close to 70% freshwater for human use.

A large share of the world population is still consuming far too little to meet even their basic needs. Halving the per capita of global food waste at the retailer and consumer levels is also important for creating more efficient production and supply chains. This can help with food security, and shift us towards a more resource efficient economy.

In Zambia, one study conducted by the Cornell University's Climate Change fellowship indicated that 77 million kg of food waste is generated per year in Lusaka alone. This amount of food waste is capable of producing 6 thousand tonnes of methane gas. To put it into perspective, that amount of methane if convert into electric energy can power up to 40,000 households for a year! But alas these emissions go in the environment and adds to global warming.

Performance Assessment



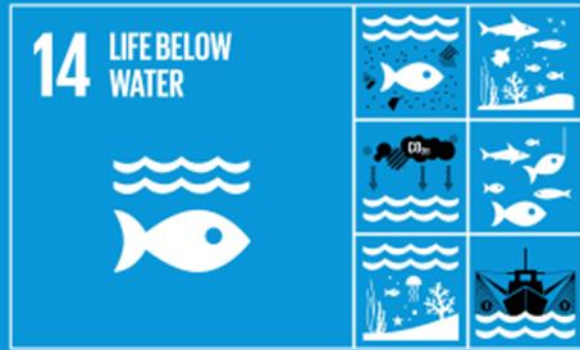
There is no country that is not experiencing the drastic effects of climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions are more than 50 percent higher than in 1990. Global warming is causing long-lasting changes to our climate system, which threatens irreversible consequences if we do not act.

The annual average economic losses from climate-related disasters are in the hundreds of billions of dollars. This is not to mention the human impact of geo-physical disasters, which are 91 percent climate-related, and which between 1998 and 2017 killed 1.3 million people, and left 4.4 billion injured.

Interventions to mitigate against the adverse effects of climate change implemented in Zambia, include the integration of climate change in the school curriculum; promotion of alternative sources of livelihoods; promotion of climate smart agricultural practices, such as minimum tillage and residue retention, agroforestry, diversification of crops and crop rotation; Climate proofing of infrastructure; and development of renewable energy such as the use of solar and wind energies.

The Government needs to strengthen links with the private sector and also raise community awareness on climate change matters and at the same time prioritise the collection of data on climate change impacts, and capacity in the analysis of the same.

Performance Assessment



The world's oceans (their temperature, chemistry, currents and life) drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. How we manage this vital resource is essential for humanity as a whole, and to counterbalance the effects of climate change.

Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, today we are seeing 30 percent of the world's fish stocks overexploited, reaching below the level at which they can produce sustainable yields.

Oceans also absorb about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, and we are seeing a 26 percent rise in ocean acidification since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Though Zambia controls fishing through the prohibition of fishing during the breeding season, some areas can be classified as overexploited and the use of harmful fishing practices such as the use of mosquito nets and poison are still practiced. There is also a high rate of industrial pollution into the rivers and lakes as well as the indiscriminate disposal of waste in drainages, which ends up in rivers and ultimately in the oceans.

Zambia needs to enhance its laws on pollution as well as enhance the enforcement of these laws. Zambia also needs to address the encroachments into wetlands and forests.

Performance Assessment



Human life depends on the earth as much as the ocean for our sustenance and livelihoods. Plant life provides 80 percent of the human diet, and we rely on agriculture as an important economic resources. Forests cover 30 percent of the Earth's surface, provide vital habitats for millions of species, and important sources for clean air and water, as well as being crucial for combating climate change.

Every year, 13 million hectares of forests are lost, while the persistent degradation of drylands has led to the desertification of 3.6 billion hectares, disproportionately affecting poor communities.

Zambia faces a growing deforestation problem. It has been estimated that forests cover 66 per cent of the country's total land area. To tackle the challenge of deforestation and forest degradation, Zambia has developed a national strategy based on an integrated natural resources management perspective at landscape level.

There is also a presence of forest-based industries, charcoal production, fuelwood collection, commercial logging and production of non-timber forest products are still present and need to be regulated.

Performance Assessment



The SDGs can only be realized with strong global partnerships and cooperation. Official Development Assistance remained steady but below target, at US\$147 billion in 2017. While humanitarian crises brought on by conflict or natural disasters continue to demand more financial resources and aid. Many countries also require Official Development Assistance to encourage growth and trade.

The world is more interconnected than ever. Improving access to technology and knowledge is an important way to share ideas and foster innovation. Coordinating policies to help developing countries manage their debt, as well as promoting investment for the least developed, is vital for sustainable growth and development.

The period 2015-2018 was marked by consistent downward trend in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), reversing a past trend of rising FDI prior to 2015. This reflects an unfavourable business environment, marked by subdued economic growth, which has been exacerbated by energy shortages. Similarly, the flow of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) into the country, though fluctuating, has been generally declining.

Conclusion

Zambia, like the rest of the UN member states, has implemented policies, legislation and measures to combat climate change issues and environmental degradation. Some of these measures have been linked directly to the Sustainable Development Goals. While there has been some strides in an attempt to achieve the goals, there are still a number of challenges that need to be addressed in ensuring the achievement of these goals at the end of the 2030 Agenda.

In relation to clean water and sanitation, the nation's water supply system faced persistent challenges of unaccounted for water, most of it due to wastage through leakages. The utility companies also faced a challenge of extending water supply to newly developed areas, resulting in high incidences of borehole drilling, resulting in disturbing underground water systems.

Conclusion

There was also a challenge of low hours of water supply as well as the high numbers of households with water supplies outside the homesteads, this entails a high workload, especially for the women and girls who walk long distances to fetch water as culturally the chore of collecting water is still associated with women and girls.

With insufficient power generation capacity and a general low usage of sources of energy, the use of wood based energy is high resulting in deforestation and exacerbating climate change and its effects such as reduced rainfall and droughts.

Zambia has been experiencing the effects of climate change which have resulted in extreme weather conditions, such as droughts, rising temperatures, and unpredictable rainfall patterns. The frequency and intensity of climate events is expected to rise in future, with negative socio-economic impacts on communities. It is estimated that climate change will cost the country approximately 0.4% of annual economic growth and without action, rainfall variability alone could lead to losses of 0.9% of GDP growth over the next decade.

The key sectors that will be most affected include agriculture, manufacturing, mining, energy, and services.

Conclusion

Zambia emitted 120 million metric tons of greenhouse gases in 2011. The land use change and forestry sector contributed 61% to overall emissions, followed by the energy sector (19%), agriculture sector (17%), waste sector (2%) and industrial processes sector (1%).

Greenhouse gas emissions increased 3% from 1990 to 2011

Zambia commits to reducing carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 25% by 2030.

Some of the interventions implemented for accelerating action toward climate mitigation include:

- Improving surveillance systems for climate-related risks;
- Improving utilisation of climate data and information;
- Strengthening sustainable forest management;
- Improving solid and liquid waste treatment, disposal and emission reduction;
- Introducing low carbon, efficient mass transit systems for public transportation in Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces; Replacing fossil fuel-based power generation with renewable energy sources;
- Increasing coverage of early warning centres; and Establishing Emergency Operation Centres.