

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of UNDP Support to Zimbabwe under ZUNDAF: 2012-2015

**Enhanced Economic Management  
and Pro-poor Development  
Policies and Strategies**

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## Acronyms

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|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AAP     | Accelerated Action Plan                                 |
| ACBF    | Africa Capacity Building Foundation                     |
| ADB     | African Development Bank                                |
| ART     | Antiretroviral Therapy                                  |
| CCS     | Commitment and Control System                           |
| CMED    | Central Mechanical Equipment Department                 |
| CPD     | Country Programme Document                              |
| CPAP    | Country Programme Action Plan                           |
| CSO     | Central Statistical Office                              |
| CSO     | Civil Society Organization                              |
| DFID    | Department for International Development                |
| DFMAS   | Debt Management and Financial Analysis                  |
| DRI     | Development Reality Institute                           |
| EU      | European Union  |
| GDP     | Gross Domestic Product                                  |
| GEPM    | Gender Economic Policy Management                       |
| GoZ     | Government of Zimbabwe                                  |
| HACT    | Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer                    |
| HDI     | Human Development Index                                 |
| HPI     | Human Poverty Index                                     |
| ICT     | Information Communication Technology                    |
| ILO     | International Labour Organization                       |
| IMF     | International Monetary Fund                             |
| IRBM    | Integrated Results Based Management                     |
| LCDF    | Local Council Development Fund                          |
| LFA     | Logical Framework                                       |
| MA      | Managing Agent  |
| MDGs    | Millennium Development Goals                            |
| M&E     | Monitoring and Evaluation                               |
| MICS    | Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey                      |
| MOFED   | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development            |
| MOEPIP  | Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion  |
| MOHCC   | Ministry of Health and Child Care                       |
| MoPSLSS | Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Services  |
| MTP     | Medium Term Plan  |
| NANGO   | National association for Non-Governmental Organizations |
| NEPC    | National Economic Planning Commission                   |
| NGOs    | Non-Governmental Organizations                          |
| NSA     | Non State Actors  |
| NSS     | National Statistical System                             |
| OPC     | Office of the President and Cabinet                     |
| PASS    | Poverty Assessment Study Survey                         |
| PAAP    | Poverty Alleviation Action Plan                         |
| PFMS    | Public Finance Management System                        |
| PIU     | Project Implementing Unit                               |
| PVOs    | Private Voluntary Organizations                         |
| RBA     | Regional Bureau for Africa                              |
| RBM     | Results Based Management                                |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| RP        | Responsible Party  |
| RRF       | Results and Resources Framework                          |
| SNV       | Netherlands Development Organization                     |
| SADC      | Southern African Development Community                   |
| STERP     | Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme                  |
| TCPL      | Total Consumption Poverty Line                           |
| UN        | United Nations   |
| UNDP      | United Nations Development Programme                     |
| UNICEF    | United Nations Children Fund                             |
| UNCT      | United Nations Country Team                              |
| UNFPA     | United Nations Population Fund                           |
| USAID     | United States Agency for International development       |
| ZANU-PF   | Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front          |
| ZDHS      | Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey                       |
| ZIA       | Zimbabwe Investment Authority                            |
| Zim Asset | Zimbabwe Agenda for sustainable Economic Transformation  |
| ZIMSTAT   | Zimbabwe Statistical Agency                              |
| ZUNDAF    | Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework |



## Introduction

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Zimbabwe's population was estimated at 13.72 million in 2012 with 41 percent of the total population below 15 years of age. The average age is 20.2 years, and the country has a population growth rate of 4.36 percent, the second highest in the world. Life expectancy at birth for Zimbabweans is 58 years (2012).

Zimbabwe was under an externally brokered Government of National Unity (GNU) from February 2009 until July 2013 when the general elections were held. The GNU saw the establishment of 38 government ministers in an effort to accommodate the 3 parties, a structure based more on concession than functionality. The elections ushered in a new government with ZANU-PF in the majority. The elections took place under the backdrop of the new widely consulted Constitution of 2013, which sets out to provide basic human rights, gender equity, land distribution and political accountability.

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has made efforts to re-engage with the international community and, to date, some international funders have softened their stance and new pledges for development assistance are coming up. Though Transparency International ranked Zimbabwe at 157th out of 177 countries with a score of 21 out of 100 under the Corruption Perceptions Index,<sup>1</sup> there has been an effort to eradicate public sector corruption.

On the economic front, over the 1999-2009 period, the country recorded one of the worst socio-economic declines in Africa, which resulted in very significant adverse effects across the entire economy. Zimbabwe is currently recovering from a decade of this economic turmoil, a period which witnessed unprecedented hyperinflation which resulted in high unemployment; rising poverty; erosion of savings; and low levels of investment. The multicurrency regime which was implemented in 2009 resulted in a measure of economic stability and growth, with an increase in the GDP rate to 5.4 percent in 2009, 8.1 percent in 2010, and 9.3 percent in 2011. In 2012, Zimbabwe's GDP stood at \$9.802 billion a GDP growth of 4.4 percent over the previous year. In 2013, real GDP growth decelerated to an estimated 3.4 percent. The Mid Term Fiscal Policy Review of September 2014 revised growth downwards from 6.1 percent to 3.1 percent<sup>2</sup> as the country's economic situation worsened in 2013 and 2014, The country also recorded a huge trade deficit. Mining has become the major contributor to GDP followed by agriculture and manufacturing. Throughout 2013 and into 2014, global commodity prices declined, thus, causing a drop in mineral income.<sup>3</sup> Tobacco has taken over as the major cash and export crop and hectareage under the 'golden leaf' increased by 21 percent in the 2013/2014 cropping season. Manufacturing has faced low capacity utilization, at around 40 percent,<sup>4</sup> with some companies facing challenges of inadequate and expensive electricity, antiquated machinery and high labour costs.

Zimbabwe's poverty profile is noteworthy in the light of the above described economic adversity. The country was ranked 172<sup>nd</sup> out of 187 countries according to the 2013 Human Development Index<sup>5</sup> and is classified as one of the 62 Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries<sup>6</sup>. The Human Development Index (HDI) was as high as 0.425 between 1985 and 1990 and plummeted to 0.338 during the years of economic meltdown. There has been a significant rise in the country's HDI, at 0.397 in 2013. However, this was

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/country#ZWE>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, 2014 Mid term Fiscal Policy Review, Harare, September 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Chamber of mines mineral contribution report.

<sup>4</sup> Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) 2013 survey

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, Human Development Report, New York, UNDP, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, List for 2013, <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/lifdc/en/>

still below the Sub Saharan average of 0.463.<sup>7</sup> In 2011, 72.3 percent of Zimbabweans were classified as poor. Poverty in the country has a much higher incidence rate in the rural areas than in the urban areas. About 76 percent of rural households are poor as compared to 38.2 percent of urban households. Extreme poverty affects 30.4 percent of rural people while only 5.6 percent<sup>8</sup> of people in urban areas are living in extreme poverty. The results of the PICES 2011/12 show that Matabeleland North, Mashonaland Central, Matabeleland South, Manicaland and Mashonaland West provinces have poverty prevalence levels of above 70 percent. [Table 1](#) below shows an indication of this scenario.

**Table 1: Poverty Indices by Place of Origin**

| Residence       | Prevalence % |                 | Poverty indices   |                        |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|                 | Poverty      | Extreme poverty | Poverty gap index | Poverty Severity Index |
| HOUSEHOLDS      |              |                 |                   |                        |
| Rural           | 76.0         | 22.9            | 36.1              | 20.1                   |
| Urban           | 38.2         | 4.0             | 12.3              | 5.6                    |
| ALL Zimbabweans | 62.6         | 16.2            | 27.7              | 15.2                   |
| Rural           | 84.3         | 30.4            | 42.8              | 25.4                   |
| Urban           | 46.5         | 5.6             | 15.5              | 7.2                    |
| All Zimbabwe    | 72.3         | 22.5            | 34.1              | 19.6                   |

Source: ZIMSTAT, 2013: Poverty and Poverty Datum Line Analysis in Zimbabwe 2011/12

According to the Zimbabwe Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES), 2011/2012, poverty is closely associated to the employment status of the household head. Both rural and urban households with self-employed headed households as well as casually employed suffer the highest incidence of poverty. According to the 2012 census, informal employment is at 70 percent of those considered employed. Conversely, households that are headed by a permanent paid employee or by an employer have the lowest probability of being poor. Poverty is also more prevalent among households with older heads. Male- and female-headed households have about the same rate of poverty, 62.9 percent (male) and 62.0 percent (female). It is worth observing that the positive economic growth rates that Zimbabwe has recorded since the signing of the GNU in 2009 have not translated into higher employment rates.

Prior to the economic crisis, Zimbabwe recorded some of the most promising MDG achievements. However, the crisis significantly slowed down a number of these achievements and, in a few cases, actually reversed them. This has resulted in serious erosion of the country's capacity to meaningfully transform the economy along the path that would secure livelihoods for the majority of its citizenry. Effective planning and actual implementation of the required reforms became a challenge due, in part, to systemic failures. Of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), only four of the 21 targets are likely to be met by 2015. The country faces the largest challenges in achieving MDG1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; and MDG5: improve maternal mortality.<sup>9</sup> For every 100,000 live births, 960 women died from pregnancy-related causes in 2011. Maternal health-related issues are responsible for the death of 12 percent of women aged 15-49 as of 2010–2011. Even though in the last decade the number of people living with HIV has decreased, 18 percent of the female population and 12 percent of the male population are reported to be infected with HIV,<sup>10</sup> and only half of them have access to anti-retroviral drugs. The prevalence rate for 15 to 24 year olds is 15.5 percent. Zimbabwe has met the Abuja target of a

<sup>7</sup> UNDP, MDG progress report 2012,

<sup>8</sup> Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey 2011/2012

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Zimbabwe/MDGR%202012final%20draft%208.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF 26 December 2013

malaria incidence rate of 68 per 1,000 people. 27 percent of all at-risk households have at least one insecticide-treated net.<sup>11</sup>

The development of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) running over the 2011-2015 period was one of the main responses towards reversing the declining economic fortunes of Zimbabwe. MTP became Zimbabwe's national development strategy and its focus included poverty reduction through pro-poor growth stimulation through both wealth and employment promotion. In general, MTP aimed to transform the declining economy; reduce poverty; create jobs; maintain macro-economic stability; and restore Zimbabwe's capacity to be competitive. Following the July 2013 elections, the Government revised its national development strategy by replacing the MTP with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset), which was subsequently launched in October 2013. Based on a Results-Based Management (RBM) agenda, Zim Asset is founded on four strategic clusters, namely, (a) Food Security and Nutrition; (b) Social Services and Poverty Eradication; (c) Infrastructure and Utilities; and (d) Value Addition and Beneficiation.

Against the above background, The UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Zimbabwe that runs over the 2012-2015 period was designed with an eye on directing attention to the country's economic and political challenges as summarized above. CPD was made to be sufficiently flexible to allow it respond promptly and positively to the country's emerging socio-economic challenges. CPD aimed to be responsive to the ZUNDAF priorities. It is also guided by the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) strategic focus on capacity development for pro-poor growth and accountability (CD-PGA). CPD also drew its thrust from the UNDP corporate strategic focus that targeted poverty reduction and MDG achievement; democratic governance; crisis prevention and recovery; and environment and sustainable development. This focus took into account UNDP's global comparative advantage.

Chapter 2 briefly looks at the evaluation objectives and methodology while Chapter 3 presents the analysis of the findings, focusing on the Projects design and processes employed to achieve the Outcomes. In this respect, the Chapter critically looks, firstly, at the relevance and strategic position of UNDP support in Zimbabwe. This is followed by the analysis of the appropriateness of those frameworks and strategies that UNDP employed to achieve the targeted Outcomes, looking at each one of the three Projects in turn and, subsequently, drawing conclusions from this with an eye on the next ZUNDAF programming circle. Chapter 4, still on the analysis of the findings, focuses on the actual performance of the targeted projects towards the set Outcomes. Chapter 5 presents the main findings and conclusions of the evaluation while Chapter 6 presents the recommendations and lessons learnt from UNDP experience.

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<sup>11</sup> Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2013

## Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

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This Outcome Evaluation was conducted during the months of September and October 2014 and aims to contribute to the setting of strategic direction as well as to providing input to the new UNDP Country Programme and the next Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) whose preparations are scheduled to begin in 2015. This Evaluation focuses on three Projects that form the basis of the analysis. These are (a) Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe; (b) Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management; and (c) Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System. In terms of purpose and scope, the Evaluation assesses the following:

- (a) The relevance and strategic position of UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor initiatives.
- (b) The frameworks and strategies that UNDP has devised for its support on economic management and pro-poor initiatives, including partnership strategies, and whether they are well conceived for achieving planned objectives.
- (c) The progress made towards achieving outcomes, through specific projects and advisory services, including contributing factors and constraints.
- (d) The progress to date under these outcomes and what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor development.

The Evaluation focuses on one of the seven ZUNDAF national development priorities, namely, *Enhanced Economic Management and Pro-poor Development Policies and Strategies*. This ZUNDAF outcome is re-stated in UNDP's 2012-2015 Country Programme Document (CPD) for Zimbabwe and operationalised in the UNDP CPAP. UNDP's *Pro-Poor Sustainable Growth and Economic Development Programme*, which was introduced to support capacity development for economic transition to development, forms the main focus of this Evaluation. The Evaluation is done in context of the objectives, goals and ideals of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIM ASSET) that runs over the 2013-2018 period.

In terms of Evaluation methodology, both secondary data collection (desk review) and primary data collection were used. Secondary data collection entailed the review of documentation regarding the country's economic and social conditions, in general, and the magnitude of poverty in the country, in particular. It also examined the governing principles of the UN System in so far as this informed the UNDP programming processes. Primary data collection, in turn, involved interviews based on unstructured questionnaires and targeted five different categories of respondents, namely, UNDP officials; UN Agencies officials; Government of Zimbabwe officials; Cooperating Partners/donors; and Non-State Actors (NSAs). [Appendix 4](#) lists the names of the people interviewed. This Outcome Evaluation was guided by the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Collected data/information has been analysed using various approaches that began, as a starting point, from the expressed *Outcomes* of the interventions and working backwards to establishing the levels of inputs and subsequent outputs. In this regard, a combination of elements of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA); Results-Based Management (RBM) Approach and the much newer Theory of Change (ToC) Approach has been deployed during analysis to determine the efficacy of UNDP interventions under the Projects being evaluated.

### 3.1 Introduction

The analysis of the findings in this Evaluation is divided into two categories. The first part (this Chapter) looks critically at each one of the three Projects in terms of the relevance and strategic position of UNDP support; appropriateness of UNDP framework and strategies that are used under each one of the three Projects; then, finally, based on the analysis of the three Projects, make an overall analysis regarding what the three Projects have demonstrated. Conclusions are made as part of the broader analysis. The Projects assessed are (a) Towards 2015: Supporting MTP implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe; (b) Strengthened national capacities for public finance, aid and debt management; and (c) Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System. Following the merger of the former Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion and with the former Ministry of Finance to create the now Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, projects (a) and (b) above were merged at the beginning of 2014. The merged Project is called *Strengthen Economic Management Systems*. As this is a very recent development, it is considered appropriate to analyse the two projects separately.

### 3.2 Analysis of Relevance and Strategic Position of UNDP Support

#### 3.2.1 Main Projects

The relevance and strategic position of UNDP support to Zimbabwe, one of the main focus areas of this Evaluation, ought to be appreciated in the context of the country's conditions. The analysis below is made based on review of the three targeted Projects, namely, (a) Towards 2015: Supporting MTP implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe; (b) Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management; and (c) Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System.

With respect to the Project: ***Towards 2015: Supporting MTP implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe***, all its four main components confirm its relevance and strategic position for they are clearly aligned to what ought to be done in the country towards achieving the developmental aspirations as expressed in the Zim Asset and as per the expectation of the MDGs. The Project component on *Economic Policy Formulation, Strategic Planning and Advisory Services*, for example, addresses the protracted economic meltdown over the 2000-2008 period when the country lost a great deal of capacity in economic policy formulation and strategic planning. Many professionals that possessed the requisite skills in the relevant fields left the country and the institutional decay that resulted from inadequate financial resources contributed significantly to capacity loss. It also became clear that national capacities in economic management required to be enhanced and, in some cases, created from scratch altogether, particularly at sub-national levels in such areas as project planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, under the component on *MTP Implementation*, UNDP aims to extend support, through technical assistance (TA), for national processes targeting the implementation of pro-poor and MDG-responsive development strategies for sustained economic recovery and employment creation, now within the context of Zim Asset. This component is relevant to national aspiration in the light of the capacity challenges that have been caused by the current economic difficulties.

The Project's component on *MDG monitoring and reporting, and Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) Development* is equally important in that it aims to address some of the challenges faced by Zimbabwe towards accelerated MDGs attainment. Overall, this component aims to facilitate better monitoring and reporting of MDG progress in Zimbabwe and, as an integral part of this, facilitating the production and

implementation of the National MDG Accelerated Action Plan, which has since been launched. The last component of the Project, namely, *Increased capacity for MDG- based planning, awareness and commitment to the MDGs*, is equally relevant to the country. There is recognition that many national and local level actors in Zimbabwe have limited capacity to proactively get engaged, on the one hand, in national planning processes and, on the other, in the implementation of national plans. Also targeted under this component is advocacy for the MDGs and the mobilisation of stakeholder commitments towards these. The establishment and operationalization of the MDG Virtual Learning Centre is a particularly important innovative way of the Projects targeted outputs, which are, (a) increased national awareness and commitment to the MDGs; and (b) increased local capacity for MDG-based planning.

With respect to the Project: ***Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management***, its various components are clearly relevant to Zimbabwe's requirements. The Project's component on *Public Finance Management* supports a felt need, namely, the strengthening of an integrated public finance management system (PFMS) in a bid to contribute to greater transparency and accountability in the management of domestic and external resources. This includes support towards the upgrading of the PFMS, facilitation of the implementation of the PFMS roadmap; and strengthening the Office of the Accountant General. The *Aid Management and Coordination* component, similarly, addresses an important part of national development Agenda. UNDP support under this component is targeted at the achievement of development results through the provision of TA towards the revamping of aid co-ordination mechanisms. The establishment of an effective Aid Co-ordination Secretariat is targeted in order to secure a more effective aid management system. There is recognition within the country that a good development cooperation Policy and Strategy should set the agenda for both the Government and its Cooperating Partners towards making aid more effective. The *Debt Management* component, in turn, aims to contribute towards the strengthening of Government's institutional capacity for the management of debt. This is planned to be done through upgrading of the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS); facilitation of specialised training for DMFAS end-users; and the provision of support, in conjunction with other Cooperating Partners, towards the formulation of a debt arrears clearance strategy. Support towards the development and operationalisation of a Debt Management Strategy is also included under this component. Lastly, the component on *Programme Management Capacity Strengthened* aims to offer support to the strengthening of the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate projects, which speaks to the identified organisational capacity challenges that the Ministry currently faces.

Lastly, with regard to the Project: ***Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System***, its components also speak to the felt needs of the country in this area. The Project's component on *Strengthening the capacity of ZIMSTAT and the NSS* focuses support towards skills development, analysis and change management, an area which is still quite weak in Zimbabwe. One of the main re-orientations in data management at this level relates to systemic preparedness for results-based management (RBM). The component on the *Promotion of awareness on the use and value of statistics*, in turn, aims to promote better appreciation of the value of statistics and its use in day-to-day planning and monitoring of interventions. The component on *Effective management and coordination of NSS* targets the enhancement of collaborative arrangements for engaging and coordinating stakeholders across NSS. This is in view of the limited collaboration, coordination and harmonisation of statistical generation, processing and dissemination effort among a diversity of actors. The Project, under this component, supports the establishment of M&E within NSS at national and sector levels, which is important for the tracking of progress during programme/project implementation.

Lastly, the component on the *Production and dissemination of quality data and statistics* aims to address the most urgent statistical gaps through surveys, which would result in the production and dissemination of quality and dependable economic statistics with the aim of meeting some of the priority needs of end users, including Government. Current statistics is generally not directly relevant to those that most need it.

### 3.2.2 Critical Analysis on UNDP Relevance and Strategic Position

The assessment of the three Projects above has brought to the surface a number of realities regarding the relevance and strategic position of UNDP support in Zimbabwe. *Firstly*, it is clear that UNDP has made a clear effort to align its country support to the expressed aspirations of the country. Its selection of interventions, which adhered to the priorities that were expressed in MTP and subsequently in Zim Asset, testify to the UNDP commitment to being responsive to the developmental needs of the countries where it serves. The Project *Towards 2015: support to MTP implementation and MDG achievement* is particularly noteworthy in this respect. The choice of the Project's four main components discussed underscored the UNDP intention to improve MDG monitoring and reporting function. Similarly, UNDP facilitation of a multi-donor collaborative support to ZIMSTAT and the National Statistical System has contributed towards the strengthening of national capacity in the production and dissemination of quality data and statistics.

*Secondly*, while UNDP has responded well to the MTP priorities, the Organisation has to operate in a political and economic environment that is undergoing considerable transformation, firstly, under conditions of Government of National Unity (GNU) and, secondly, when Government reorganized the ministries in a manner that altered the implementation process for some of the Projects under review. The GNU saw the establishment of 38 Government ministries in an effort to accommodate the 3 parties, a structure that was based more on reaching some concessions than on operational effectiveness, a state of affairs that somewhat affected the realisation of the ZUNDAF outcomes, in general, and the performance of the UNDP Projects under review. In particular, the separation of the development planning function from the budgeting portfolio did have a debilitating effect on the smooth implementation of most of the projects under review.<sup>12</sup> The July 2013 harmonized elections ushered in a new Government, which cut the ministries to 24.

*Thirdly*, the Project on *Economic Policy Formulation, Strategic Planning and Advisory Services* is particularly important for the transformation of the Zimbabwean economy and it is here where the choice of interventions taken by UNDP and other Cooperating partners to support the country is important. Beyond what UNDP is currently doing, there are other areas, constituting gaps, where capacity frailties ought to be addressed, an opportunity for consideration during the next ZUNDAF/CPD programming. While the identification of projects through the inclusive ZUNDAF process is commendable, the internal capacity of Government to meaningfully input into such process remains quite weak. One capacity enhancement area that deserves attention is *project appraisal*. This is a function that secures both the integrity and relevance of a chosen project. Ideally, all projects are expected to be subjected to an appraisal prior to their inclusion in public investment plan/programme. A unit within the ministry in charge of finance is usually assigned this function, performed in-house by the ministry itself or outsourced to competencies outside government but using the government's standard appraisal protocols. The structure of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in Zimbabwe does not lend effective support to the appraisal function. To the extent that the Ministry is the IP for the implementation of a number of the Projects that are supported by Cooperating partners, internal competences in project appraisal is desirable. Without sufficient project appraisal capacity in-house within its planning portfolio, the Government's ability at the macro level to determine or influence sector priorities tends to be haphazardly done and the expected moderating intervention by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development remaining weak.

*Fourthly*, as part of capacity building, the three Projects under review have technical assistance (TA) components. This is an important component in capacity enhancement effort and UNDP has taken a proactive position at this level. When better facilitated and managed within an enabling policy environment, TA plays a useful role in institutional and human resource development particularly in those

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<sup>12</sup> Both the planning and budgeting functions are now under the same Ministry.

areas where certain competencies are inadequate or non-existent. While there is recognition of the many positive contributions that UNDP has made through TA, the absence of an overall, consistent and coherent Government strategy in this area can inadvertently frustrate a number of capacity building efforts especially that TA does not come cheap. There is clearly need to identify and address the existing gaps in national technical capacities, which have continued to compromise positive growth and development in Zimbabwe. The absence of a coherent technical cooperation policy framework and implementation mechanism has further compounded this problem.

*Fifthly*, the UNDP-supported PFMS strengthening in the context of the Project on *Strengthened National Capacity for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management* is a particularly strategic area of support and the activities under it ought to reflect better what it takes to make a significant effect towards desirable outcomes. A closer scrutiny of both the performance of, and actual authority enjoyed by, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is important to form a good basis for a more effective capacity building intervention for this important central Ministry. All ministries of finance world-over possess the two-pronged role of (a) determining the *allocations* of financial resources and maintaining-cum-enforcing the requisite fiscal discipline; and (b) *supervisory* function, which aims to ensure that spending ministries secured value for money in the context of the set objectives of government.

With respect to the allocative function, indications are that the Ministry has performed this responsibility fairly well particularly at the level of ensuring prudential application and accountability of public resources. A 2012 review by Deloitte<sup>13</sup> concluded that “there were no significant risks identified...[with respect to] financial management’ in the areas of accounting policies and procedures; internal audit; external audit; financial reporting and monitoring; and information systems. With respect to funds flow, the Deloitte Report concluded that “the Ministry [of Finance] operates foreign currency bank accounts within Zimbabwe and is able to receive and transfer funds from and to external parties fairly freely. No specific measures are in place to cater for donor funding but the current controls surrounding funds flow have been assessed as being sound.”

The Government’s internal audit is also considered to be adequate. As the Deloitte Report concluded, “The Ministry has an Internal Audit Department, which is a statutory requirement according to the Audit and Exchequer Act section 19. Internal audit staff is adequately qualified and experienced. Donor agency funded programmes are audited by the internal auditors. Audit findings are monitored, implemented and followed up by all relevant personnel.” The management of financial information system of Government in 2012 was equally considered to be good and posed no threat in terms of fiduciary considerations. As the Deloitte Report concluded, “the Ministry [of Finance] uses a sophisticated computerised enterprise reporting package (SAP – Public Finance Management System). This system has built-in customisable access control settings and is managed centrally by the Central Computing Services who are in charge of maintaining regular backups and consistent functionality. Donor funds [are] recorded within PFMS (the sub-system).”

It is important to recognise that the supervisory function goes well beyond the mere preservation of value for money which is the main target of the current UNDP support.<sup>14</sup> The responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development should include securing a consistent government policy across all the arms of the Government in the country. Here lies what currently seems to be the missing link in UNDP capacity building support which deserves to be better conceptualised and programmed in the next

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<sup>13</sup> Deloitte, United Nations Development Fund: Micro-assessment of the HACT Implementation Partners: Ministry of Finance, Harare, June 2012.

<sup>14</sup> As revealed earlier, UNDP supports the strengthening of an integrated public finance management (PFMS) system that targets the greater transparency and accountability in the management of domestic and external resources with interventions including the strengthening of the Office of the Accountant General as the nucleus of PFMS functions.

ZUNDAF. In the light of this, while it is a reality that sector level policies originate from sector ministries (that should assume a *lead* role in their crafting), it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to ensure that there is policy consistency particularly in those areas that possess important implications for macroeconomic and fiscal stability, including around issues that facilitate a hospitable environment for attracting foreign direct investment that is needed to contribute towards the turning around of the national economy. The Finance Ministry's *supervisory* function is particularly evident when it comes to the budgetary process since, at this level, it is the legislated function of this central Ministry to ensure that budget submissions received from sector ministries remain in tandem with approved Government policy and the guiding resource application instruments such as the national annual budget and the Mid-Year Fiscal Policy Review Statement. At the ministerial functional level, this means that it is also the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to ensure, through checking, that spending ministries are not only pursuing the Zim Asset's stated objectives but also that resource spending maximises value for money. This also entails ensuring that procurement procedures are adhered to in order to eliminate possible abuse of resources.

To address the systemic and operational issues associated with PFMS, it is important, before a meaningful effort is embarked upon at the level PFMS capacity enhancement, to establish the extent to which the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development commands sufficient capacity to discharge both the *allocative* and *supervisory* roles. Does the Ministry possess appropriate organisational structure and capacity, sufficient political authority, suitable incentives, and the right skills mix to discharge these mandates diligently? One noteworthy aspect about the organisational structure of the Government at the time ZUNDAF was developed and subsequently approved was that, as earlier hinted, it separated the intimately linked functions of *planning* and *budgeting* between two Ministries that hardly coordinated their functions. Consequently, the planning and budgeting functions remained fragmented, an aspect that threatened the needed stability in the functional link between the Government and the ZUNDAF system, in general, and the UNDP projects under review, in particular.

*Sixthly*, one of the components of the Project on Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG Achievements in Zimbabwe is entitled *MDG monitoring and reporting, and Accelerated Action Plan development*. Effective M&E at the national level as well as in all programming remains critical in managing for results and, in this regard, UNDP support is considered crucial. There is a growing drive globally, including within the UN System, to move decisively towards results-based monitoring that focuses on agreed targets and results. One of the major challenges that presently affect the monitoring function in Zimbabwe relate to the existence of fairly dated statistical databases both within the Government system and outside, itself the main reason for the UNDP entry into ZIMSTAT support. The status of data collection, processing, management and dissemination capacities of most data-generating bodies, though varied, are generally weak and capacity enhancement through, *inter alia*, training is merited to ensure that data sets are up-to-date. There clearly exists in Zimbabwe a major problem of weak information management system at the national level in the country that needs to monitor and report on MGGs performance. Some of the causes of the data hurdles relate to inadequate human resources; weak capacity in data generation, analysis and coordination; weak infrastructure and lack of resources for data collection. Staff exodus from many Government institutions has exacerbated the problem of managing data. This has had the overall adverse effect on accessibility and reliability of data that is needed to monitor/track MDGs performance. At another level, there are serious data dissemination challenges. Weak dissemination of information has been an urgent challenge that requires urgent attention.

### **3.3 Analysis of Appropriateness of UNDP Framework and Strategies**

#### **3.3.1 Main Projects**

With respect to the Project on *Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG Achievement in Zimbabwe*, one noteworthy positive aspect of its design is that, although the implementation of the different components involves diverse stakeholders with varied focuses, the outcomes mutually reinforce

those that are targeted under MDGs. The Project was, thus, designed in such a way that the progress made in relation to the MTP necessarily corresponded to progress on the MDGs and vice versa. With regard to the Project's *strategies for achieving results*, it is designed to be implemented by national institutions in conjunction with other development partners that command comparative advantages and expertise. UNDP provides technical input and advisory services and works closely with the key Government ministries that are involved in formulating and implementing economic management policies and plans. It also works with decentralised local government actors, Cooperating partners, civil society and the private sector. Moreover, UNDP pursues advocacy and engages in strategic dialogue at the levels of mobilising increased commitment, allocating resources and drawing attention to MDGs. In achieving results under the Project, UNDP coordinates its support, to the extent possible, with other Cooperating partners/donors.

At the level of *Project Management Arrangements*, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion (MoEPIP) was initially responsible, as Implementation Partner (IP), for the implementation of key aspects of the Project, in addition to coordinating the different Project components. After the reorganisation of Ministries, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development assumed this role. The responsibility for the implementation of project components is delegated to four Responsible Parties (RPs), namely, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Services (MoPSLSS), the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and the Development Reality Institute (DRI). RPs assumed full responsibility for the implementation of agreed activities within their respective focus areas.

The IP appointed a Project Coordinator who manages the Project. The Project Coordinator works closely with the Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as well as with the UNDP MDG Programme Specialist. By design, it is the Project Coordinator who assumes the day-to-day management responsibility of the Project, including “implementation of activities and accountability for the delivery of the Project’s outputs and preparation of quarterly and annual work plans and reports, and..., in collaboration with the Economic Advisor and Programme Specialist, make[s] decisions based on the consensus arrived at by the Project Board.”<sup>15</sup> The Project Board, on its part, provides oversight and accountability and meets quarterly under the Chair of the Permanent Secretary for Economic Planning and Investment Promotion. The membership includes the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; UNDP; Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Services; SNV; NANGO; and DRI. By design, *Project Assurance* is being provided by the UNDP Country Office in Zimbabwe, which is mandated, according to the Project Document, to “oversee programmatic and policy compliance.”<sup>16</sup>

With respect to *Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation*, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, in its capacity as the Project IP, oversees the production of quarterly progress reports showing disbursements against each activity, lessons learned and recommendations. At year end, the IP is expected to prepare annual progress reports, which present Project performance, including expenditure pattern. It is noteworthy that only UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures are used and this also applies to the preparation of annual work plans (AWPs), quarterly project board meetings, quarterly financial reports and annual auditing of the Project. The Project Document states that “the project will be monitored in accordance with the programming policies and procedures outlined in the UNDP User Guides...In addition, a Monitoring Schedule Plan shall be activated using UNDP tools...to track key management actions/events.”

The second Project evaluated, namely, ***Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management***, national institutions are, by design, expected to implement it. UNDP and other

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<sup>15</sup> Project Document

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. The decisions of the Board will relate to the scope, extension, expansion, reduction, or continuation of the project. The Board is also responsible for mobilizing funding, providing required advocacy and reviewing and approving work plans.

Development Partners provide technical inputs and advisory services. The Project is implemented in close collaboration with key ministries involved in formulating and implementing economic management policies and plans. In its work, the Project aims to foster the spirit of collaboration and coordination with other Cooperating partners such as UN agencies, World Bank, IMF), AfDB, DFID, and African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). At the level of management arrangements, the Project is being implemented through National Implementation Modality (NIM) procedures with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as the IP with the Project Coordinator linked to the Ministry to manage it. It is the expectation that the Project Coordinator works in close liaison with UNDP Country Office and assumes the day-to-day responsibility of all aspects related to the Project, including taking up the monitoring function. The Project Board provides oversight and accountability and its meetings are convened quarterly under the Chair of the Permanent Secretary for Finance and Economic Development to review the overall progress and outcomes of the Project. The membership of the Board includes the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and UNDP. It is the responsibility of the Project Board to make all policy decisions relating to the Project, which include the scope, extension, expansion, reduction, or continuation of the Project. The Board is also responsible for mobilizing funding, providing necessary advocacy, reviewing and approving the work plans and oversee implementation processes. At the level of Project Assurance and Technical Assistance, this is provided by the UNDP Country Office in Zimbabwe, which, as in the other projects supported by the Organisation, oversees programmatic and policy compliance and provides technical support to the Project Manager. With regard to the *Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting* function, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, as the IP, produces quarterly progress reports and annual progress reports, which summarise Project performance, including expenditure pattern. As part of the requirements, the IP is expected to ensure that the M&E procedures are fully consistent with UNDP requirements. Thus, the Project is monitored based on UNDP programming policies and procedures. Apart from this and as is the case in other UNDP-supported projects, a Monitoring Schedule Plan is activated using UNDP tools.

Lastly, with regard to the Project on ***Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System***, it has a two-pronged approach where staff from both ZIMSTAT and UNDP are the focal points. Resident at UNDP is the Project Specialist who manages the Project, including assisting in the development of project documents, annual work plans and setting up the M&E framework. Also from UNDP but resident at ZIMSTAT are the Project Coordinator and the Project Assistant. At ZIMSTAT, the Project is represented at Deputy Director General level who is responsible for Project activities. The Project Director is supported by the Project Coordinator who is a ZIMSTAT employee. The Project has a Steering Committee/Project Board that is chaired by ZIMSTAT and membership drawn from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, USAID, USAID, and EU. A number of Cooperating Agencies have partnered with ZIMSTAT. They include DFID, the biggest funder with a commitment of US\$10 million over the 2013 to 2015 period. Others include USAID, UNICEF, AfDB, UNFPA, ACBF, and the World Bank. The Project also has a Technical Team comprised of lower level representatives of the members of the Project Steering Committee. The ToRs of the Technical Team include the provision of technical support, including proposing the annual and quarterly plans, to the project and the Project Steering Committee.

At the design stage, a combination of pooled and parallel funding options was envisaged for the Project. Resource pooling option is viewed as the most effective approach with UNDP as the Managing Agent. The parallel funding option has been left open for those Cooperating Partners whose systems cannot allow them to route their support through the pool funding modality. Notwithstanding the preferred financing modality, resource pooling has not been possible. Instead, a coordinated approach to partnering has been fostered. With respect to the monitoring, evaluation and reporting function, all signatories to the ZIMSTAT Project are responsible for this with the guidance of UNDP based on its guidelines and procedures. The Steering Committee is at the forefront of the reporting, monitoring and evaluation

function by utilizing quarterly reports, annual reports and annual reviews and tripartite reviews to monitor progress.

### 3.3.2 Critical Analysis of UNDP Framework and Strategies

The manner in which external support is received, managed, monitored and reported explains the extent to which it is appropriate in terms of its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and the supported interventions sustainable. In looking at the appropriateness of UNDP frameworks and strategies, a critical examination of the implementation modalities being used for three Projects, as explained above, suggests that, broadly speaking, the framework and strategies used by UNDP have been appropriate at several important levels. *Firstly*, the strategies that have been used to achieve results confirmed a tilt in favour of country ownership and leadership. All the three Projects examined identified a ministry as the Implementation Partner (IP). The Project on *Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG Achievement in Zimbabwe* and the one on *Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management* both have the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as their IP. Country leadership at project implementation levels is important as national systems are used, which, in itself, is good for capacity enhancement and tends to better secure the sustainability of the interventions. Country leadership at the implementation level is perhaps more entrenched in the *Towards 2015* Project to the extent that, at the level of actual implementation, four locally-based Responsible Parties (RPs) earlier described were identified and have since performed generally well within their respective focus areas. Country leadership is also enhanced by making the Permanent Secretary from the IP as Chair of the Board.

*Secondly*, all the Projects have Project Boards that superintend over the operations of the Projects and, thus, offer leadership at a higher level. There are, however, issues that require deeper introspection on the part of the UNDP and the Government with respect to the composition of the Project Boards. Most importantly, the membership of the board in one of the Projects (*Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG Achievement in Zimbabwe*) include all the RPs. Ideally, good corporate governance requires that, to the extent that implementers receive their directions from the Board (to which they are technically answerable) they should not be made members of this oversight body (that also has accountability functions) otherwise they are made answerable to themselves. These RPs can be allowed to be “in attendance” during Board Meetings while actual membership should be left to, say the IP, the major Cooperating Partner (e.g. UNDP) and other co-opted independent members that are selected based on their individual professional standing in the relevant field.

*Thirdly*, the monitoring, reporting and evaluation function is correctly placed under the IP. This is how it should be. The preparation of periodic reports on performance is an important function and the fact that this has been one of the key responsibilities of the Project Coordinator, usually residing within the IP, is commendable. While, as a standard procedure for all the examined Projects, only UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures are allowed to be used,<sup>17</sup> one expects that this is a transitory arrangement while capacities are being developed within the Government systems. This is because, when UNDP resources have to be accounted for using different reporting formats and timelines from those of Government, parallel systems and structures are introduced that ordinarily would cause a functional stress on the already over-burdened public service officials that have other line functions. The situation becomes even more unbearable if and when the country gets more Cooperating Partners/donors that too would demand separate monitoring and reporting formats that are applicable to themselves alone. In this regard, to the extent possible and as the IP is established to have enhanced its capacity to monitor progress, the use of local/country-level monitoring systems is more appropriate. More importantly, to the extent that UNDP

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<sup>17</sup> This applies to, *inter alia*, the preparation of annual work plans (AWPs), quarterly project board meetings, quarterly financial reports and annual auditing of the Project. Project Documents generally state that “the project will be monitored in accordance with the programming policies and procedures outlined in the UNDP User Guides...In addition, a Monitoring Schedule Plan shall be activated using UNDP tools...to track key management actions/events.”

and the Government both emphasise results-based management that ostensibly call for more harmonised systems of monitoring results/outcomes, the progressive adoption of country systems of monitoring is unavoidable in the medium-term.

*Fourthly*, the efficiency and sustainability of the Projects has been called to question. This Evaluation has established two main factors that could threaten the efficiency in resource use and the realisation of intended Outcomes. First, the capacity challenges within ZIMSTAT, including inadequate data processing personnel, have reduced the speed at which deliverables are achieved. This is principally a problem that originates from the government-wide human resource challenges to the extent that, although it is a parastatal, ZIMSTAT depends on recruitment policies of Government and the associated conditions of service. The Government has faced serious fiscal stress in recent years and a partial recruitment freeze is in operation. Second, the financial disbursement procedures by UNDP have tended to slow down the project implementation processes. Funding from DFID, the main funder, is being channelled through UNDP, whose standard procedures favour disbursements made directly to service providers as opposed to routing the money through the Project managers that are in charge of implementation. This preferred payment modality is said to have a negative effect on Project execution as it is reported to delay not just the finalisation of prevailing surveys but also subsequent ones. From the standpoint of UNDP, the explanation for delays in resource flow rests in the IPs/RPs camp as the later are said to often submit inadequate documentation, in addition to delays in submitting acquittals for previous payments when requesting for payments.

The preference by UNDP to opt for direct payment to services providers ought to be understood in the right context. While it is desirable to use national systems, the financial management, auditing, reporting and monitoring challenges have limited the extent to which it can disburse directly to ZIMSTAT without serious fiduciary risk. The 2012 micro-assessment of ZIMSTAT by an accounting firm, Deloitte, revealed serious capacity challenges at this level, which led the firm to conclude that there is “significant’ control deficiency that has dogged the Organisation. [Box 1](#) summarises the findings of Deloitte.

What is important to state is that, irrespective of the justification of the current UNDP modus operandi, the slow implementation challenges to which seems to contribute calls for the review of how best to speed up financial disbursements in the interest of smooth realisation of the set Outcomes. Similarly, the ZIMSTAT system required a complete overhaul to put it in line with what the average Cooperating Partner would find acceptable if it is to successfully mobilise external resources for its noble mission.

*Fifthly*, the procurement function for the supported Projects is done using UNDP rules, guidelines and procedures. This is as per the signed agreement between ZIMSTAT and UNDP. In the light of the capacity challenges in Zimbabwe’s PFMS and public procurement systems (some of which being the main target of interventions in the *Towards 2015* Project), it would be imprudent to wholesomely transfer this function to the feeble national systems. For the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, however, the Deloitte Report earlier quoted concluded with respect to the Government’s accounting policies and procedures (including those regarding procurement), thus:

“The Project Office [within the Ministry of Finance] vets the vendor before registration. State Procurement Board (SPB) issues circulars on thresholds. The SPB publishes the lists of companies that the Ministry can transact with. There is no accounting system for the processing of donor funds. This function is possible within the government financial application, PFMS. Fund allocations are done in accordance with the budget plan. There is adequate segregation of duties.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Deloitte, United Nations Development Fund: Micro-assessment of the HACT Implementation Partners: Ministry of Finance, Harare, June 2012.

### **Box 1: Status of ZIMSTAT: Results from Micro-assessment of the HACT Implementing Partners**

#### ***Staffing***

The organization structure shows job descriptions that are not consistent with the current job titles. In addition, there are duplications of roles among the accountants and accounting assistants according to the job descriptions. The Entity is understaffed owing to lack of funding. However, the structure supports segregation of duties. The organizational structure has been approved by the board of directors and concurred with the Ministry of Finance. New salary structures are yet to be approved, so that the entity can start filling up the vacant positions.

#### ***Accounting Policies and Procedures***

The entity is guided by the Finance and Administration Policies Manual and the Public Finance Management Act. The Financial Reports are still being prepared in Excel because Pastel is not yet up-to-date. We observed that the Accounting Assistant initiates payments to suppliers on the payment vouchers and also approves the payment on the Paynet System. The Principal Accountant authorizes the initiation of a payment and also authorizes the payment on Paynet as well as submitting to the bank. There is a risk of segregation of duties issues, which may potentially lead to or misappropriation of funds.

#### ***Internal Audit***

There is no internal audit for the institution. ZIMSTAT does not currently have internal auditors to perform internal audit functions. Without internal audit, there is no credibility to the sound functioning of the internal control system and the accounting system and the institution funds may be exposed to misappropriation.

#### ***External Audit***

The Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) are the ZIMSTAT external auditors. The last external audit was done for the year ended 2009. The ZIMSTAT external audit for the years 2010 and 2011 have not been conducted yet by the Comptroller and Audit General by 31 May 2012. This may result in delayed decision making by the Organisation, as well as delayed reporting to the funding partners.

#### ***Reporting and Monitoring***

The entity has recently implemented Pastel Evolution Accounting system. The system has the capacity to produce adequate financial reports as well as manage donor funds, but is yet to be up-to-date. Financial reports are still being produced from Excel.

#### ***Overall Risk Classification***

Significant, which entailed “an important control deficiency that affects the entity.”

Source: Deloitte, Micro-assessment of the HACT Implementing Partners: ZIMSTAT, Harare, August 2012

This finding by Deloitte suggests the existence in 2012 of positive indications regarding the reliability of the Government system of procurement, at least at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. In the medium to long-term, therefore, national procurement systems should be sufficiently strong to be used for both domestic and externally-generated resources. The reported procurement challenges that continue to be faced by some of the examined Projects, particularly with respect to the ZIMSTAT support, call for serious reflection especially when such challenges begin to affect the speedy realisation of the project outcomes.

Sixthly, the component on Aid Management and Coordination under the Project *Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management* touches on fundamental aspects that Zimbabwe has not yet fully embraced, partially because it is not a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness although the Government officials interviewed confirmed that they have keenly followed the evolving aid architecture. This state of affairs is also explained by Government inability to fully embrace the UNDP-supported initiative that facilitated a consultancy that aimed to assist in the crafting of a development cooperation framework/policy. One of the considerations with important implications for both the success of the aid relationship and for the overall capacity enhancement agenda within Government relates to the absence of a structure/system that enables more effective and informed

dialogue between the Government and Cooperating Partners, including UNDP (i.e. beyond the projects that are reviewed). An effective dialogue mechanism is considered more important now in Zimbabwe than ever before considering the evident stand-off between the Government and some of the strategic Cooperating Partners that once played strategic roles in the development of the country. Facilitating such a dialogue framework or mechanism is also key to the achievement of most of the targeted outcomes under ZUNDAF, in general, and under the CPD and CPAP.

*Seventhly*, one important element that ought to be considered in the next ZUNDAF programming regards the need for the UNDP to make a concerted effort to strengthen country ownership of the projects and programmes that it supports. As an example, according to the Project Document, a large majority of the members of the Steering Committee/Project Board of ZIMSTAT are donors. Although ZIMSTAT chairs the Committee, the overwhelming number of donors on the Board/Committee<sup>19</sup> relative to Government representation clearly flies in the face of local ownership principles.<sup>20</sup> In projects where there are many Cooperating Partners contributing to the budget, only a couple of donors could be appointed to sit on the Committee to represent the others. Many comparator countries have done this on a rotational basis.

*Lastly*, the principle of *mutual accountability* needs to be upheld. Under this principle, donors and developing countries must account more transparently to each other for their use of aid funds, and to their citizens and parliaments for the impact of their aid. Ideally, mutual accountability calls for clearly defined commitments *on both sides of the aid relationship*. In this respect, Cooperating Partners are expected not to crowd out the mutual accountability agenda with their own monitoring and reporting demands in a way that could leave the Government at the receiving end of donor procedures and protocols without any reciprocal expectation from themselves.

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<sup>19</sup> According to the Project Document, membership is from ZIMSTAT, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, USAID, USAID, and EU. The Consultants were, however, informed by UNDP that, in practice, the donors specified above do not all sit on the Committee at the same time and that only those who are active for specific Outputs sit on the Steering Committee.

<sup>20</sup> Discussions with one UNDP official suggested that, when the Project was operationalised, there could be other government members on the Board that were not attending meetings. The Project Document, however, refer on to the ones stated here.

## Projects Performance towards Outcomes

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### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 analysed the rationale for, and performance of the systems and structures that UNDP put in place to realise the intended Outcomes. This Chapter examines the actual performance of the three Projects that are being examined in the context of their fulfilling one of the ZUNDAF Outcomes, namely, Enhanced economic management and pro-poor policies and strategies.

### 4.2 Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe

When the appropriateness of this Project was analysed in Chapter 3 above, it was noted that four Responsible Parties (RPs) were involved, namely, (a) Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Services; (b) the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations; (c) the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV); and (d) Development Reality Institute (DRI). These RPs have assumed full responsibility for the implementation of agreed activities. DRI has increased national awareness and commitment to the MDGs. DRI has also created a virtual learning centre which hosts four initiatives under the Project, namely, online MDG courses; the MDG offline course on CDs; the Zim Asset stakeholder's forum in partnership with universities; and a Document Repository. The courses are intended to create awareness for the MDGs and progress being made for anyone who is interested in development issues. DRI also provided live streaming services for conferences where MDGs are being discussed.

With respect to the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Services, it has concentrated on the acceleration of MDG 2 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture. SNV, in turn, has handled the development of MDGs attainment plans at the district level. Using the present districts structures, the Ministry has assisted the District Development Committee prioritise its goals based on the status of the MDGs as informed by data collected from the districts. In this respect, SNV's role has focused primarily on Accelerated Achievement of MDGs. This has been done through performing the following:

- (a) Increasing local capacity for MDG based planning, implementation and monitoring, resulting in District MDGs baseline development and prioritisation.
- (b) Increasing Districts capacity development for MDG based planning and budgeting.
- (c) Stakeholder engagement in MDGs initiatives (including the private sector).
- (d) Mobilisation of resources for the implementation of MDGs initiatives.

In the light of the above, SNV has piloted Accelerated Achievement of MDGs in 10 districts in Matebeleland North and South as chosen by the Government. The interventions managed by SNV under this component of the Project have succeeded in using local structures for resource mobilisation. However, it has been established that there are no province-level structures. Monthly tracking of progress is done using 2 systems, namely, (a) through the UNDP approach where quarterly work plans and results are tabled at the quarterly meeting; and (b) through the SNV reporting platform.

NANGO, on its part under the Project, has trained parliamentarians on MDGs with special focus on building their capacity to advocate for increased budgetary resources for MDG. NANGO also sensitised communities on MDGs as well as post -2015 activities with a focus on Sustainable Development Goals.

During 2012, a good number of key achievements were recorded, which, collectively, pointed to opportunities for positive outcomes. The following are noteworthy:

*Project component 1: National processes for policy formulation and implementation established:* The achievement of desired results under this component was buttressed through the expert advisory services of a UNDP-supported Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion. Policy advisory services were continuously provided by UNDP towards development planning processes, which included the production of analytical pieces of work. Some of these included the Quarterly Economic Bulletin; Advisory Briefs prepared for the Head of the Ministry; Bi-annual National Economic Reports; Quarterly Economic Bulletins; and support to the preparation of Macro Fiscal Frameworks for the Mid-Year Fiscal Review and the National Annual Budget. The latter was developed through various sector working groups that were supported by expert advisory services from the UNDP. The Macro-Economic Framework/model guided the Government's Mid-Term Fiscal Policy Review Statement and the 2013 National Annual Budget as well as the first Annual MTP Progress Report. On the hardware side, the Zimbabwe Investment Authority (ZIA) was equipped with computers, both desktops and laptops.

*Project component 2: MTP implementation monitored and reported:* Following a highly involving and consultative process, the first Annual MTP Progress Report was facilitated by the Project and successfully launched and disseminated in November 2012.

*Project component 3: National MDG progress monitored and reported upon:* The 2012 Zimbabwe MDG Progress Report was finalized in November 2012.

*Project component 4: Accelerated Action Plan developed and implemented:* The MDG Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) on MDG2 was developed. The Plan was of high quality, thanks to the UNDP Regional Service Centre input and the strong national ownership of the process adopted, which included wide participation from a variety of stakeholders. The MDG Resource Centre was also equipped with furniture, books and computers in readiness for its opening. This was, however, not done during 2012.

*Project component 5: Increased national awareness and commitment to the MDGs:* A total of 6 workshops were carried out during 2012. Participants to the workshops reported in their feedback that they now understood and appreciated MDG issues better than before, and that they had a clearer picture of MDG related-gaps in the Zimbabwean context. A total of 157 CSO representatives were trained (93 men and 64 women). In addition, all the 5 NANGO Regional Resource Centres were stocked with new up-to-date MDG-related resources, which made access and engagement with MDG material more accessible to NGOs and the general public. The MDG youth essay and art competition was also launched. Moreover, a workshop on MDG-related issues was held with Parliamentarians in November 2012. The MDG Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) was also fully developed, finalized and launched in November 2012, an event that attracted 194 participants representing multiple stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and private sector. It was reported that the VLC received good feedback from participants with a number of them committing themselves to future collaboration.

*Project component 6: Increased local capacity for MDG-based planning:* MDG status reports for each of the districts chosen for the first focus were produced resulting in the creation of district databases which consequently enabled the monitoring of progress towards achievement of the MDGs. Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) to agree on implementation plans and to identify areas for stakeholder collaboration in each of the prioritized goals were also conducted. The plans were used, inter alia, for resource mobilization. The MSPs, in turn, offered opportunities for raising awareness to MDGs and to encourage communities to take responsibilities for their own development. It is at these MSPs that a draft proposal for a common Local Development Fund was developed.

It is clear from the above that the different components of the Project on *Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe* posted results in its formative year. Although the lack of updated quality data delayed the compilation of the 2012 National MDG report, the MTP Progress Report and the AAP, the good progress catalogued above pointed to the potential for the achievement of the UNDP CPAP target of having in place national pro-poor and MDG responsive development strategies, which, in turn should contribute to the realisation of the overall ZUNDAF Outcome, namely, “Enhanced economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies.” [Appendix 1](#) summarise the *Towards 2015* Project performance status during 2012 and 2013, respectively.

While significant positive progress (as documented above) has been recorded, which should contribute towards arriving at the desirable Project Outcomes, a number of important programmed interventions/outputs have faced significant challenges. *Firstly*, during 2013, the Project’s Output 2, namely, *National MDG Steering Committee operational*, could not come to fruition. The 2013 Annual Progress Report recorded that “No Progress was made towards this output. A formal review and operationalization of the National MDG structure was not realized in 2013 due to the immense focus on the launch of the 2012 MDG Report and AAP. ... The 2013 National harmonized elections [also] inhibited the implementation of some project activities.”<sup>21</sup> It seems unreasonable that the launch of the 2012 MDG Report could be so onerous as to derail the operationalisation of the all-so-important National MDG Steering Committee.<sup>22</sup> The failure to do this has had adverse implications for the Project whose goal is primarily MDGs achievements. What it also meant was that the MDG Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) whose launch was also delayed but was subsequently effected on 29 May 2013 along with the 2012 MDG Progress Report was denied the operational ‘apparatus’ in the form of the Steering Committee that is essential to oversee and guide to the AAP processes.

*Secondly*, the Project’s Output 3 during 2013 was “*MDGs Resource Centre operational*.” Although the Resource Centre was reported to have been equipped with furniture, books and computers during 2012, it was not officially opened in that year. Nor was it opened to the public during 2013 either because, according to the Annual Progress Report, electrical installations were not completed because of “... bureaucratic procedures for servicing government departments.”<sup>23</sup> It was actually observed in the Project’s 2013 Annual Progress Report that “...the cost for the establishment of the MDG Resource Centre keeps rising as it has taken too long to be completed.”<sup>24</sup> As the time of this Evaluation (October 2014), the MDGs Resource Centre was still not opened to the public. To the extent that the Resource Centre was conceived as an important pillar in the MDG sensitization effort, the failure to open it in time before the MDG’s 2015 target raises fundamental questions regarding the degree to which the Project can meaningfully realize its set Outcomes. It also brings to the fore issues regarding the efficiency in resource use when resources are tied to an investment that is not ultimately opened to the public. This has raised legitimate concerns at the level of the effectiveness and efficiency of this component of the Project.

*Thirdly*, there has been limited progress during 2013 with respect to the achievement of another earmarked output for the year, namely, *Improved planning and budgeting at local authority and District levels for achievement of priority MDGs*. Save for two Rural District Councils (RDCs) that formed revenue collection committees (which were not oriented by the Project by the close of 2013) as well as some workshops conducted for councilors, chiefs and headmen to ensure better appreciation of the budgeting and planning processes, little progress was recorded towards achieving this output. The process towards reorienting the Committees was also compromised in July 2013 following the decision by the

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<sup>21</sup> 2013 Annual Progress Report, *Towards 2015: Supporting MTP implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that, when the responsibility for MDG tracking and reporting moved to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Labour remained chair of the MDG Steering Committee. The frosty relations between the two ministries contributed to this state of affairs.

<sup>23</sup> 2013 Annual Progress Report.

<sup>24</sup> 2013 Annual Progress Report.

Minister of Local Government to write-off all debts owed by residents to RDCs covering the period from 2009 to June 2013. This singular decision derailed the realization of an output of one of the planned activities for the RP of this component (SNV), which is to improve budget performance in the Rural District Councils, which includes the enhancement of their capacity for revenue collection. At this level, the Government seemed to have frustrated the Project's capacity building effort at the lower level. And yet this is an important component of the Project goals especially considering the magnitude of planning and budgeting capacity challenges at the sub-national level<sup>25</sup> which, if not addressed properly, would continue to derail service delivery at this level. These challenges clearly threaten the prospects for the attainment of the MDGs.

*Fourthly*, the operational environment within which the Project has thus far conducted its business has been rather disabling in important respects and, consequently (as demonstrated above), a good number of planned activities could not be implemented or were only partially fulfilled. Interviews and secondary data during the course of this Evaluation confirmed that the operational environment challenges introduced by systemic changes at the national level often explained the low Outcome achievement rate. The following developments in Project implementation during 2013, as reported in Quarterly Progress Reports, are particularly noteworthy in this regard:

*Project Component 1 - Output 1: Pro-poor policy processes supported and reports produced:* No progress was made towards this output in the reporting period. All activities had scaled down in preparation and anticipation of the National General Elections. After the elections, ministerial project leadership remained unclear. Consequently, no progress was recorded.

*Project Component 1 - Output 2: Technical capacities for selected economists in Macroeconomic Policy Analysis Enhanced:* Interviews for the ICT Support Assistant were held and a suitable candidate identified. However, actual recruitment was halted until the future of the Ministry was ascertained.

*Project Component 2 - Output 1: 2013 MTP Implementation Report developed, published and disseminated:* All activities under this activity were not achieved as the Government unveiled a new economic blueprint (Zim Asset) to replace MTP.

*Project Component 3 - Output 2: Consultations on post 2015 development agenda:* Planned dialogue on the Post 2015 Development agenda was cancelled due to commitments to the preparations for national elections. Consequently, a task team to lead national preparations for the post 2015 UN development Agenda in consultation with stakeholders was not established. After the elections, no further progress was made on this as clarity on ministerial project leadership remained vague.

Similar challenges were recorded during the first half of 2014. For example, the second Quarter Report on the Project revealed that no progress was registered on its Output: "Local MDG acceleration plans developed in 10 districts." Consequently, none of the four targeted indicators were achieved.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the three planned interventions during the second quarter of 2014 relating to the Output on "Local Authority and District officials capacitated to plan and budget for priority MDGs" were not achieved.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Issues that emerged from the capacity needs assessment for the RDCs included poor service delivery, lack of relevant equipment and adequately skilled and experienced staff; self-interested decision-making (staff and policy makers); pressure from 'informal' (un-billable) service users; narrow and under-performing revenue bases; revenue collection issues and budget underperformance; inadequate coordination and non-predictability of non-Council revenue streams; huge debts owed by citizens, the private sector and Central Government; inadequate appreciation of key planning and coordination institutions; disconnect between plans and budgets; etc.

<sup>26</sup> These were (a) Participatory MDG assessments in 3 districts and review acceleration plans in 7 districts; (b) Develop 3 implementation strategies; (c) Conduct dissemination workshops to share plans at district level; and (d) Conduct workshops to facilitate planning for resource mobilization.

<sup>27</sup> These were (a) Conduct MDG capacity needs among Local Authorities and District levels; (b) Develop a capacity building strategy for planning and budgeting including on priority MDG implementation; and (c) Implement capacity building activities/training/mentoring for improved planning and budgeting in 10 districts.

Likewise, the 2014 second Quarter output, still on MDGs, on “Financing mechanism (LCDF) for MDG focused activities established” was not undertaken and all the four targeted indicators not achieved.<sup>28</sup>

SNV is the RP for most of the above Project components that could not be undertaken during the second quarter of 2014. The main reason for this, according to the 2014 Second Quarter Progress Report was reported as follows:

“SNV did not make much progress towards [the] outputs...in the second quarter because they operate under an advance system, and delays were experienced in the disbursement of advances with SNV only receiving the advance on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2014, when the quarter was just being concluded.”

This reason is a bad verdict of the financial disbursement system, which borders on Project efficiency (value for money) and its effectiveness that speaks to, inter alia, the efficacy of the Project with regard to the attainment of the targeted Outcomes. This is irrespective of the often reported ‘blame game’ that has tended to characterize the UNDP-IPs-RPs discourse regarding who is responsible for the delays.

It is important to note that the election period in Zimbabwe in 2013 also took a toll on efforts by the Project to implement the agreed activities. DRI, for example, had to broker more harmonious and clearer relations with Government departments following the massive changes to the superstructure of Government Ministries. New MoUs had to be designed and engagement protocols between Project personnel (including IPs and RPs) had to be revisited, a process that was reportedly very slow and which often had to follow informal channels to reach out to the relevant policy/decision makers. The fluidity in Government-Project relationship was well summarized in the 2014 second Quarter Report of the Project “*Strengthen Economic management Systems*”:<sup>29</sup>

On average, progress against targeted activities was very limited in the second quarter of 2014. For the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the merger between the former Ministry of Finance and the former Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion still has activity implementation stuck in limbo. Although the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has written to UNDP agreeing to ‘adopt’ the former MoEPIP’s project, clarity on the future of UNDP support to Government through the project with particular focus on commitment to the activities whose responsibility previously lay with the latter Ministry is vague.<sup>30</sup>

This Evaluation has established that there are other factors behind the operational challenges presented above that are worth noting - and addressing - as UNDP prepares the next CPD and as ZUNDAF is rolled out.<sup>31</sup> Most importantly, as reported in the 2013 Annual Progress Report of the *Towards 2013* Project, there has been a generalized problem with the UNDP direct payment and approved-vendor systems, which continued during 2013 to frustrate some RPs, leading to the postponement of events or RPs themselves having to look for resources elsewhere in order to pre-finance urgent requirements. From the standpoint of UNDP, the problem has been caused by RPs’ failure to improve their planning in a manner that took cognisance of the UNDP procedures that, as per the Project design, must be followed. With a few exceptions, the UNDP is not using the advance-based systems with its IPs and RPs. All IP and some RPs were micro assessed in 2012. The conclusions from the assessments, which revealed fiduciary risks,

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<sup>28</sup> These were (a) Design governance and management structures for the Fund; (b) Engage with additional stakeholders in 2 new districts to secure buy in on the LCDF; (c) Engage with donors to fund-raise for the LCDF; and (d) Convene MSPs to review operation of the LCDF.

<sup>29</sup> This is the name of the new Project that has collapsed into one the two Projects under review, namely, Supporting MTP implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe; and Strengthened national capacities for public finance, aid and debt management).

<sup>30</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Progress Report, *Strengthen Economic management Systems*, 1 April 2014 – 30 June 2014.

<sup>31</sup> The Evaluation has established that the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF is at advanced stage of preparation. It is recommended that the findings of this Evaluation (and of the other on-going evaluations) are allowed to influence the finalisation of the up-coming ZUNDAF.

partially informed the decision by UNDP to settle for the direct payment modality. UNDP encourages RPs and IPs not to use suppliers that are not in its database, meaning that those in the Government database are disqualified unless they are also registered with the UNDP.

### **4.3 Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management**

Most of the systemic challenges discussed under the *Towards 2015* Project also apply to the implementation of this Project. In particular, progress towards the achievement of the Project Outcomes was hampered by changes in the Government system particularly at the ministerial level, in addition to the demands of the 2013 elections. During 2013, hardly any activities were carried out in the area of aid management save for the study that the UNDP commissioned to facilitate some traction on improved development cooperation but which was shelved as Government repositioned itself in the face of new structures and at a time when activities of most strategic donors either ceased or significantly scaled down. Similarly, very little work took place during 2013 in the debt management component of the Project. With respect to one of the outputs during the first half of 2014, namely, effective and efficient DMFAS system and debt management, “no progress was made ... towards this output as there was a unanimous agreement to defer this activity to the ensuing quarter to enable the responsible department to sort out pending internal leadership issues.”<sup>32</sup> This Evaluation could not establish the nature of the “leadership issues.” As a result of this postponement, the three targeted interventions were forgone, namely, (a) local training on DMFAS V.6 Database for 14 economists; (b) Develop a Procedure Manual for DMFAS V.6; and (c) local and regional training in debt management for 14 economists and 2 accountants. Due to the slow progress under this Project, some of the anticipated important inroads that were envisaged had to be shelved. They have included (a) the planned revamping of the aid coordination and development results coordination mechanism; (b) the strengthening of the debt management function; and the establishment of an effective Aid Coordination Secretariat that aimed to ensure that the architecture for development aid is able to respond positively to the changing environment.

To meaningfully conclude whether positive outcomes have been realized, a number of things ought to take place. Firstly, it is clear from the reported progress above that more focused interventions are needed to improve the country’s PFM. A typical set of activities for an effective PFMS includes overhauling of the legal and regulatory framework; reforming of the public procurement systems; and strengthening of oversight processes, including that of Parliament.

Lastly, improvements in public procurement should be seen to be an important compliment to an effective and efficient PFMS. The absence of more direct reference to public procurement improvements in the current UNDP CPAP programming is a shortcoming that needs addressing as UNDP rolls out its interventions during the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF period. The statement by the Minister of Finance in his recent 2014 Mid-year Fiscal Policy Review delivered to Parliament on 11 September 2014 underscores this point:

“...a transparent and efficient public procurement system is critical to strengthening governance and accountability in public resource management, achieving value for money and improving service delivery by public institutions. The current public procurement framework has resulted in concerns with respect to... delays in finalising procurement processes that adversely affect timeliness of project/programme implementation [and] negative impact of cost escalations arising from such delays on service delivery; [and] absence of mechanisms to hold non-performing contractors to account. It is, therefore, necessary that the Procurement Act be reviewed to tighten the public procurement framework and make it more efficient and transparent. This will entail...decentralising procurement to procuring entities to improve timeliness by allowing managers the latitude to make procurement decisions within set frameworks; giving the State Procurement Board a framework setting regulatory and monitoring role to ensure procuring entities operate within the agreed parameters; enhancing integrity, transparency and accountability of the public procurement system through linking procurement

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<sup>32</sup> 2014 second Quarter Progress Report.

planning to budget formulation; and providing for a review mechanism to facilitate verification of bidders' capacity, mandatory progress and contract completion reports.”

The link between PFMS and procurement is clearly evident from the Minister's statement above. With support from Cooperating Partners, including the UN System, the Government clearly needs to put in place a capacity building programme for the consolidation of its procurement system, focusing on, *inter alia*, the following:

- (a) The establishment of a professional procurement cadre that operates under attractive operational environment.
- (b) The implementation of supportive infrastructure, particularly an enhanced electronic database that would capture key procurement information as well as the use of ICT solutions to publish/share information on procurement opportunities and awards of contracts.
- (c) The progressive decentralization of procurement functions to ministries and provinces.

#### **4.4 Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System**

The Project has a budget of US\$71,294,000 a substantial amount of which was to be sourced from either Government or mobilised from external sources. The Government has, however, been experiencing a significant fiscal squeeze since the Project began and, consequently, the planned resources have not been flowing to the Project as envisaged. At the time of signing the Project Document, about US\$39.2 million of the total Project budget was unfunded and UNDP has been instrumental in resource mobilisation to close the fiscal gap. DfID has committed US\$10 million for three years from 2013 to 2015. . As of third quarter of 2014, DfID had released US\$4,782,380 of the pledged amount, (or 48 percent). US\$1,221,672 has been requested for disbursement during the 2014 fourth quarter. UNDP, in turn, had planned to release US\$819,746 in 2013 and US\$534,209 in 2014, bringing the total to the Project from the Organisation to US\$1,344,955. A total of US\$101,570 has been budgeted and requested for release from UNDP during the last quarter of 2014.

Notwithstanding the efficiency and sustainability challenges that the ZIMSTAT Project has exhibited (see below), there are many indications that suggest that, if these problems are addressed swiftly, many positive things will emerge. This Evaluation has established that a number of positive things have emerged from Project activities. They include the following:

- (a) Usage of statistics is noticeably high as users now trust the data and ZIMSTAT survey results are being quoted, especially the census and PICES results.
- (b) A Project website that was established is increasingly being visited by more users in spite of the fact that some of the data is not current (partially due to the reasons discussed above).
- (c) Critical country surveys have been carried out e.g. PICES, National census and agricultural surveys, which are important for planning and monitoring at both the national and sectoral levels.

With the successful dissemination of the census in December 2013, there are a range of examples depicting how the information has been utilised, which has signalled the increasing relevance of the Project. Examples include the following:

- (a) The Ministry of Health and Child Care utilised the 2012 population census data to compute coverage rates of its various programmes which are reported in the 2012 National Health Profile.
- (b) The census data was used in the debate around voter registration surrounding the harmonised national elections which took place on 31 July 2013.
- (c) The census data was used by ZIMSTAT to develop a new master sample and sampling frame, which has already been utilised for the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey; Agriculture and Livestock Survey 2013/14; Information and Communication Technology Survey and the Labour Force; and Child Labour Survey 2013/14.

- (d) UNFPA Zimbabwe, together with IPs such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development have utilised the data to set and review targets for the Integrated Support Programme which is being implemented in 26 districts of the country.
- (e) Some Members of Parliament have requested ZIMSTAT to use census data to provide them with basic demographic and socio-economic data of their constituencies.
- (f) UNICEF is drawing on the census data to inform their new country analysis and strategy.
- (g) Several articles have appeared in the press tackling various issues emanating from the findings of the 2012 population census. These include issues on access to safe water, housing and urban-rural migration. These articles have a bearing on Government policy in areas such as the Growth Point Policy and the National Housing Policy and reflect the influence the census has had on public discourse.

Moreover, the component on *Strengthening the capacity of ZIMSTAT and national statistical system* has contributed, albeit marginally due to operational challenges, to the strengthening of a critical component of national statistical data. Project results indicate that by, December 2013, the ICT needs analysis report was done, an important prerequisite to further essential work. Similarly, the results of the Project component on the *Promotion of awareness on the use and value of statistics* indicate that a communication and advocacy strategy was completed and approved and a compendium of statistics has been shared nationally. While the private sector has been well targeted, the advocacy work is still missing Civil Society Organisations that acts as a watchdog of policy implementation. Areas of improvement at this level include improvement in the extent of collaboration effort so that the processes are sufficiently inclusive of all major stakeholders. More coordination among stakeholders around targeted outcomes is still required, as is the need to ensure that there is well structured follow-up feedback system from the workshops deliberations to ensure that these meetings are not an end in themselves.

With respect to the component on the *Production and dissemination of quality data and statistics*, considerable inroads have been recorded, which promise to positively contribute towards achieving the set ZUNDAF Outcome of “Improved generation and Utilization of Data for policy and programme development and implementation by government and other partners. It is important to recognise the challenge of attribution regarding what the Project has achieved here and what the larger Organisation that houses the Project has done without the input of the Project. This underscores the importance of not looking at the Project as an isolated entity within the larger ZIMSTAT. [Box 2](#) documents the many achievements that ZIMSTAT, as an Organisation, has achieved and towards which the Project has contributed with regard to the production and distribution of data.<sup>33</sup>

**Box 2: ZIMSTAT Performance in area of Data Production and Dissemination: 2012-2013**

1. Cumulatively since 2012, all 7 planned household survey/census during the ZUNDAF period have been supported with the following results in 2013:
  - (a) 2012 population census and 2011/12 Poverty, Income and Consumption Expenditure Survey were disseminated.
  - (b) Micro-nutrient Survey Report was being finalized at the close of 2013.
  - (c) Preparations for 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and 2014 Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (LFCLS) are in progress.
  - (d) Three *ad-hoc* surveys have been carried out (Malaria, Household Targeted Survey and the NBSLEA) and their results were disseminated.
2. The Education Management Information System report for 2012 was developed with data analysis of 2013.
3. Health Management Information System reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011 were completed at the end of 2013.
4. The Gender Management Information System that was established in 2012 has been maintained.
5. New data on poverty and other indicators from the 2011/12 Poverty, Income and Consumption Expenditure

<sup>33</sup> Note that the listed successes need not necessarily attributed to the Project as the activities of ZIMSTAT (and their funding) goes well beyond the Project input. The parallel nature of the Project design and, thus, its limited integration into the ZIMSTAT systems and procedures underscores this point.

Survey was released.

6. Since 2012, all 3 targeted routine management information systems in the ZUNDAF have been supported with the following results:
  - (a) Education MIS report for 2012 was produced with data analysis of 2013 underway (backlogs remain for 2007, 2008 & 2010).
  - (b) Health MIS reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011 were produced.
  - (c) Finalization of 2012 report awaiting age- and sex-disaggregated data from the final census results.
  - (d) Gender MIS that was established in 2012 was maintained to remain functional.
    - o New data on poverty and other indicators from the 2011/12 PICES, 2012 population census and 2012 national accounts was released and is available for the MDG progress report and for the Zim Asset Annual Review Report.
    - o Since 2012, all the health and economic indicators and most social indicators in the Zim Asset have been updated.
  - (e) In-depth analysis of existing data was undertaken to promote data utilization as follows:
    - o Seven in-depth analysis reports using the 2010/11 ZDHS data were produced (1 with funding from the UN & 6 with funding from USAID and CDC).
    - o In-depth analysis of the 2011/12 PICES data was constrained by lack of access to the micro-level data set.

Source: ZUNDAF Joint Annual Review

There are areas that can directly be credited to the Project. These include the PICES surveys. There has been concerns expressed, however, that the concentration of data collection has been more on updating historical data, which is commendable for baseline purposes but at the expense of the generation of current statistics for current usage by policy makers and planners. The cross-cutting issue of gender also occupied a limited space in the project design and less so in implementation. In the project design, gender issues are thrown in as an afterthought that all statistics have to have to be gender sensitive. Surveys conducted so far have demonstrated sensitivity to this. The inaugural meeting of the Gender Statistics Working Committee was held in September 2013 with 56% of the participants being women. In terms of human rights, there is hardly a mention of that in the design and implementation of the Projects. Suffice to note that UNDP is getting stronger in strengthening gender and equality and has made significant strides in gender mainstreaming at corporate level and in programming. There is political will for gender parity and tools have been developed which should be more evident in subsequent cycles from conceptualization, inception through to implementation of projects. The gender and economic policy management (GEPM) Initiative has added more traction to this effort.

Notwithstanding the positive achievements documented above, to the extent that ZIMSTAT data is meant to feed into the policy making processes, its currency and integrity can, and has had far-reaching implication at both the sectoral and macro levels. Outdated data, for example, would not allow the Ministry in charge of agriculture to make reliable crop yield projection which, in turn, would result in spurious estimation of this strategic sector's resource requirements for government budgeting purposes, a situation that could threaten national food security. Reliable and up-to-date statistics is also essential for planning interventions and monitoring implementation progress. In a situation like what obtains in Zimbabwe, the near-absence of baseline data for macro- and micro-level planning has resulted in a situation where, as was the case during ZUNDAF programming, plans are based on 'guesstimates' due to scanty or unavailable baseline data. When important baseline information is not available, it also becomes difficult to set realistic Outcome projections, let alone to determine actual progress, through the monitoring function, towards their realisation. Indeed, the rationale/justification of launching this Project was premised precisely on the urgency of addressing these very challenges.

The 2014 first Quarter Progress Report summarised the challenges aptly:

“ZIMSTAT has struggled to comply with UNDP's procurement guidelines...Despite considerable progress made at the backlog data processing, ZIMSTAT is unlikely to clear backlogs in data processing by 20 May 2014 when the contract terms for the current crop

of temporary staff expires...ALS activities are particularly sensitive to any delays in implementation. A case in point was the delay in administering the Area Measurement module. This module requires that crops and surrounding grass are not overgrown to permit enumerators to pace around and accurately measure crop areas.”

The ‘slow’ speed in UNDP resource processing was reported to have caused some disquiet among Government officials within ZIMSTAT. The activities of the Project during the fourth quarter of 2013 were delayed by about a month due to internal UNDP processing of DfID resources. It was reported in the 2014 First Quarter Progress Report that “...Project implementation recovered in the first quarter of 2014 from the delays that were sustained in the fourth quarter of 2013 resulting from the delays in the transmission of DfID resources from UNDP New York to UNP Harare. DfID had granted an extension to February 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 for the completion of the delayed ALS activities [which are] particularly sensitive to any delays in implementation.”<sup>34</sup>

The *efficiency* of the Project is also called to question at the level of procurement systems. It was reported during interviews with ZIMSTAT officials that, in the past, ZIMSTAT undertook surveys using vehicles that belonged to the Government’s Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED). These vehicles were generally cheaper and easier to obtain for this purpose. When the UNDP procurement systems kicked in, the use of Government vehicles was mandatorily discontinued as UNDP procurement rules only provided for the hiring of vehicles from the open market through stringent competitive bidding processes. This new UNDP procedure, though it may have brought in more transparency in the procurement process, is reported to be not only more time consuming but more expensive than the earlier arrangements. As a consequence, the cost of hiring transport was reported to have escalated and the speed with which the surveys were undertaken slowed down. The number of surveys that could be carried out in a cycle was also reported to have been reduced.

Similarly, there are some UNDP procurement rules that makes little sense to the IPs and RPs. It was reported in 2013 Annual Progress Report that “the fuel management system by ZIMSTAT was not to the expectation of UNDP. The Implementation Partner thought it could use its vehicles and fuel them with project-procured fuel. ZIMSTAT was advised [by UNDP] to use hired cars as project fuel cannot be used for ZIMSTAT vehicles.”

The process-intensive procurement system has other challenges from the perspective of ZIMSTAT. It was reported that all service providers have to be registered first with UNDP for them to provide goods and services to the Project in order to secure speedy payment for the services that they render. If the supplier is not registered with UNDP, a lengthy registration process has to be undertaken, which is reported to have further slowed down the project implementation processes. For the most part of the Project execution, not all the service providers were initially trained in UNDP’s procurement procedures, an aspect that has been reported to have contributed to the delays in the procurement processes as payments of service providers lagged.

The effectiveness of the NSS would also be enhanced when the capacity of statistical data collection and analysis is extended to the sectoral level. Without capacity enhancement at this level, the full effect of the NSS would remain in check. The presence of strong data collection units in ministries and the presence of focal persons within industry associations should contribute towards the building of a more robust NSS. Anecdotal information suggests that ZIMSTAT favours government-friendly data and, to date, data is producer-driven whereas, ideally, data should be user-driven. More dialogue with end users, including the private sector and CSOs, should help towards achieving a healthy balance. While data *collection* has been significant, there is evidence of inadequate *processing* of the collected data to make it more market-responsive.

It is important to address the above vexing issue from the dimension of the *effectiveness* and *efficiency* gains. While prudential application of resources should continually be safeguarded for it reduces resource

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<sup>34</sup> 2014 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Progress Report

waste, it is at times forgotten that the real measure of project success lies in the degree to which the set objectives are realised and the intended outcomes (not outputs) are achieved. This principle also informs the current shift to results-based management (that focused on the ultimate results in the form of actual outcomes and impact rather than focusing on the *processes* used to lead to those results). What this entails is that, where the processes (e.g. management systems, including accounting and disbursement systems) stand in the way of efficiently achieving the set outcomes, what should be changed or altered should not be the Outcome targets but the processes that facilitate the attainment of the Outcomes. In other words, it would be completely outside the principles of RBM if the disbursement modality continues to be the cause of systemic failure towards achieving the intended Outcomes. Ideally, it would even make sense to stop support to a project if the local environment capacity challenges prevent prudential application of external resources or when the standard procedures of a donor cannot be altered to take cognisance of the existing capacity frailties.

The conclusions above in no way question the importance of ensuring that resources are prudently applied and that national systems that are weak are not allowed to abuse such resources. Rather, the conclusions caution against correcting an anomaly through an incorrect approach that could introduce even more serious unintended effects. Where accountability challenges within the national system (among IPs and RPs) are evident, the very first thing that should be done is to make a clear effort to address those challenges as an integral part of the priority interventions from the outset. Where project activities do not appear to have prioritised accountability challenges as the first line of ‘assault,’ bringing in external systems as a quasi-permanent solution to the acknowledged capacity challenges is not tenable.

The Government has recently signalled its political will to move in the direction of ensuring that aid is made more effective, which makes the consideration of these issues by UNDP and other Cooperating Partners quite urgent. In his *2014 Mid-Year Fiscal Policy Review Statement* to Parliament in September 2014, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development made the following clear policy position to this effect:

“The review of the development assistance framework should result in a clear and well-coordinated development cooperation framework, which is necessary for the streamlining of any fragmented structures and overlaps. In particular, the proposed review of the Aid Coordination Policy is envisaged to address the following challenges in aid coordination and management: fragmentation, duplicity and overlap of aid coordination functions; diverse and complex reporting requirements; lack of transparency in disclosing Development Partner commitments and actual funding by both implementing entities and Cooperating Partners; perceived/actual bureaucratic systems on both sides; multi development partners’ complex procurement procedures; ineffective inter-ministerial communication and coordination; lack of coordination with Civil Society Organizations and NGOs; and focus mainly on humanitarian assistance as compared to infrastructure development.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2014 Mid-Year Fiscal Policy Review Statement to Parliament by the Minister of Finance, 11 September 2014.

## Main Findings and Conclusions

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### 5.1 The Relevance and Strategic Position of UNDP Support to Zimbabwe

The following are the main finds of this Evaluation regarding the relevance and strategic position of UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor initiatives.

1. National capacity in economic management is required to be enhanced and, in some cases, created from scratch, particularly at sub-national levels in such areas as project planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation. In the light of these considerations, the decision by UNDP to assist the country in re-establishing and strengthening national processes for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, is desirable and, hence, relevant to Zimbabwe.
2. UNDP has made a clear effort to align its country support to the expressed aspirations of the country. Its selection of interventions under ZUNDAF and under its own CPD demonstrated clear positive response to the expressed priorities of the Government of Zimbabwe as stated, initially, in the MTP and subsequently in Zim Asset.
3. While UNDP responded well to the MTP and Zim Asset priorities and, hence, asserted its strategic position in the country, a good number of challenges persisted due, in part, to having to operate in a political and economic environment that underwent considerable transformation, firstly, under conditions of Government of National Unity (GNU) and, secondly, when the new Government reorganized the ministries in a manner that introduced operational challenges to the implementation of some of the strategic projects. This state of affairs did affect the realization of many UNDP-supported interventions.
4. Beyond what UNDP is currently doing, there are other areas where capacity challenges ought to be addressed, an opportunity for consideration during the next CPD programming by the UNDP. One such challenges relates to *project appraisal*. This Evaluation has revealed that the structure of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development does not seem to lend effective support to the appraisal function.
5. There is clear need within Government and within the UNDP Office to better appreciate and contextualise what capacity building support for pro-poor development planning, implementation and monitoring should actually entail in both its organisational and human resource development context.
6. The decision by UNDP to include technical assistance (TA) in its support portfolio under ZUNDAF-derived interventions is important and also relevant to national aspiration of Zimbabwe in the light of the capacity frailties that were caused mainly by economic difficulties that the country faced and still face (as well as its after-effects, including loss of professionals through migration). Important though this component is in capacity enhancement effort, there seems to be need for greater improvement in its application as an important component of aid.
7. The UNDP-supported Public Financial Management System (PFMS) strengthening is a particularly strategic area of support. This Evaluation has, however, identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed at the level of both substance and sequencing.
8. Effective M&E at the national level as well as in all programming remains critical in managing for results and, in this regard, UNDP support to this function is desirable. One of the major challenges that presently affect the monitoring function in Zimbabwe relate to the existence of fairly dated statistical databases both within the Government system and outside, itself the main reason for the

UNDP entry into ZIMSTAT support. This Evaluation has, however, established that the Project that targeted support to ZIMSTAT has performed well below par.

9. The inclusion in one of the supported Projects of the component on MDG monitoring and reporting, and Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) development is important in that it aims to address some of the challenges faced by Zimbabwe towards accelerated MDGs attainment. The high poverty level in the country has adversely affected prospects for the attainment of MDG 1 on eradication of hunger and extreme poverty.
10. Support for increased capacity for MDG- based planning, awareness and commitment to the MDGs is relevant to the conditions in Zimbabwe considering that many national and local level actors in the country have limited capacity to proactively get engaged, on the one hand, in national planning processes and, on the other, in the implementation of national plans. The development of the capacity of local actors, both within government and civil society, to enhance their participation in planning and implementation of national programmes is commendable.
11. UNDP effort is commendable in the area of strengthening of Government institutional capacity for the management of debt through upgrading of the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS); support towards the formulation of a debt arrears clearance strategy; and assistance towards the development and operationalisation of a Debt Management Strategy.

## **5.2 Appropriateness of Frameworks and Strategies used by UNDP**

Below are the main findings of this Evaluation regarding the appropriateness of the frameworks and strategies that UNDP has devised for its support on economic management and pro-poor initiatives.

1. The framework and strategies used by UNDP have been appropriate in terms of their responsiveness to national priorities; their operating within the national systems; their inclusiveness; and their sensitivity to national ownership principles.
2. While only UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures are allowed to be used, Government expects that this is only a transitory arrangement while capacities are being developed within the Government systems to assume this responsibility.
3. The procurement function for the UNDP supported Projects is being performed under the UNDP rules, guidelines and procedures. The reported procurement challenges that continue to be faced in all the examined Projects *vis-à-vis* the adoption of the UNDP procurement procedures call for serious reflection especially when such challenges begin to affect the speedy realisation of the project Outcomes.
4. One of the considerations with important implications for both the success of the aid relationship agenda and the overall capacity enhancement programme within Government at the level of aid management relates to the absence of a structure/system that enables more effective and informed dialogue between the Government and Cooperating Partners, including UNDP (i.e. beyond the forums for the Projects that are reviewed).
5. Looking at the project management and accountability structures used for the three Projects covered in this Evaluation, it is clear that there exists significant room for improvement at the level of consolidation of country ownership of the processes.
6. The principle of *mutual accountability*, which has gained prominence in the emerging aid architecture and towards which Cooperating Partners in Zimbabwe (including the UNDP) should strive to reach, is yet to take hold in Zimbabwe. The Government of Zimbabwe feels frustrated that accountability appeared not to be mutual as there seemed to be little or no accountability on the part of Cooperating Partners when one looks at the project management structures particularly at the level of monitoring for results and the reporting lines and procedures that are prescribed.

7. A number of problems have been reported in the Quarterly and Annual Reports of the Project that bring to the surface not only *what* has to be done going forward but, equally important, *how* it should be done. This Evaluation has revealed a number of systemic failures on both sides of the aid relationship which have at times been highlighted in the Projects' Annual Progress Reports with little visibility of formalised follow up procedure/action.
8. The operational environment within which the UNDP-supported Projects have thus far conducted their business has been quite disabling in important respects and, consequently, a good number of planned activities could not be implemented or were only partially fulfilled.
9. There has been a generalized problem with the UNDP direct payment and approved-vendor systems, which continued to frustrate some RPs, leading to the postponement of events or RPs themselves having to look for resources elsewhere in order to pre-finance urgent requirements.

### **5.3 Progress Made Towards Achieving Outcomes**

1. While the desired outcomes under the ZUNDAF Document are generally realistic, those given for the UNDP CPAP often missed the criteria of what really constituted 'Outcomes.' A programming mistake was made when the CPAP Outcomes were put differently from the ZUNDAF ones in both wording and substance. And yet, ideally, the CPAP Outcomes *must* always mirror those provided for in the ZUNDAF to avoid confusion. A closer look at the current ZUNDAF operationalisation tools (UNDP's CPD and CPAP) show that, in most cases, outputs are passed as Outcomes (see [Appendix 2](#)).
2. The Programmes under ZUNDAF achieved a good number of their programmed output targets. The disbursements to the global ZUNDAF activities as of end of 2013, however, reflected more the comparative advantage of the UN System (mainly Human Development) and does reveal a significant bias towards a consumptive expenditure pattern that is important in the light of the poverty levels in Zimbabwe but that is not sufficient in the current simultaneous effort to turn around Zimbabwe's stressed economy.
3. National awareness and commitment to the MDGs has been increased although not to the anticipated level due to the disruptions caused by the general elections and the subsequent reorganisation of the Government Ministries.
4. The development of MDGs attainment plans at the district level has been limited but still holds potential to assist the District Development Committees prioritise goals based on the status of the MDGs as informed by data collected from the districts.
5. Thus far, very limited progress has been recorded under the Project on Strengthened National Capacities for Public Finance, Aid and Debt Management. During 2013, hardly any activities were carried out in the area of aid management. Similarly, very little work took place during 2013 in the debt management component of the Project.
6. More focused interventions are still needed to improve the country's PFM and some form of a public expenditure management and financial accountability interventions remain missing.
7. The Project on Support to ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System has recorded many successes especially at the level of contributing towards its main targeted output, namely, the strengthening of the Capacity of ZIMSTAT and National Statistical System (NSS). One obvious challenge with the Project related to the inadequate reporting on its activities in the Annual Progress Reports.

## Recommendations and Lessons Learnt

### 6.1 Recommendations

These findings and conclusions from the analysis in this Evaluation have brought to the surface a number of recommendations at different levels in the area of enhanced economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies. The recommendations below are classified according to the broad thematic areas that speak to the main aspects of this Evaluation. They are tendered with an eye on how best UNDP-Zimbabwe could benefit from the lessons learnt during the current ZUNDAF so as to inform the next ZUNDAF programming circle.

#### 6.1.1 Consolidation of UNDP Strategic Focus in Economic Management and Governance

1. Capacity limitations in the field of economic management in Zimbabwe has been recognised as one of the most evident challenges facing the country and for which capacity enhancement at both the institutional and human resource level is considered essential. UNDP has found itself in a position in Zimbabwe where it is at the apex of external influence in a country that has suffered significant reductions in external support from Cooperating Partners. While this state of affairs has pushed the Organisation into areas where it traditionally possesses limited comparative advantage *vis-à-vis* its traditional focus, it does open opportunities for equipping itself with human resource competences and technical tools that should broaden its fields of operational interest. In a country where national capacity in economic management has been eroded by many years of stressed macroeconomic and fiscal downturn, a positive role of UNDP in economic transformation has to come with a commitment for self re-assessment, focusing on how best the Organisation can develop its own internal capacities to better contribute to the needed changes in economic management. In this respect, it is recommended as follows:
  - (a) Considering its elevated mandate to fill the gap left by many Cooperating partners, UNDP-Zimbabwe needs to strengthen its macroeconomic and sectoral advisory services, particularly during the period before other Cooperating Partners re-emerge and assume a more positive complimentary role. This calls for enhancement of in-house and short-term outsourced competence mix in economic/development planning and macroeconomic modeling.
  - (b) Additional in-house capacity in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), especially as it relates to poverty interventions, is also needed considering the magnitude of assistance that is required within the Government in this field. Enhanced M&E expertise is also important in programme design, which is so essential for securing desirable effects especially in the area of targeting poverty reduction.
2. The UNDP advisory services in economic governance need to include advocacy for decentralised modes of service delivery. In the economic sphere, this entails fiscal decentralisation as this holds greatest promise for reaching out to lower level organs where MDG-induced effects must reach. Capacity building for economic management and governance is particularly required at this level of intervention in the light of the findings of this Evaluation to the effect that there are serious capacity challenges at sub-national levels in such areas as project planning, budgeting and M&E. It is important to recognise that decentralised modes of delivery, justified though they are, in principle, rarely emerge on their own from support systems that focus capacity building attention at the central structures. To reach out there, UNDP needs to embark on an economic governance advocacy/crusade

(similar to the MDG effort) to influence the Government approaches towards more devolved modes of service delivery. The attainment of MDG is more likely to be realised through this process.

3. The weak project appraisal function at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development needs to be addressed as an important prerequisite to building the Government's capacity to accommodate and better manage externally supported projects. When this function is weak, the ability of the Government to invest in viable programmes, whether internally- or externally financed, remains problematic, an aspect that leads to wasteful resource application. In this regard and as an integral part of its capacity building support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, UNDP is advised to consider assisting Government in building this form of capacity.
4. The poverty focus of UNDP strategies needs to be re-examined to ensure that the issue of pro-poor economic growth is better conceptualised and that the interventions that will be included in the next ZUNDAF speak accurately to the challenges on the ground. In understanding the dynamics of pro-poor growth (or lack of it), one needs to appreciate who the poor are and how they sustain their livelihoods. To the extent that the agriculture sector houses the largest number of poor people in Zimbabwe, what transpires in this sector offered explanatory weight to the gulf between positive macroeconomic performance and its insignificant dent on poverty levels in the country. Equally as important, even for the poor people in urban areas (and the numbers are not insignificant), poverty targeting is still more towards social welfare provisioning (in the context of Human Development – health, education HIV and AIDS, water and sanitation, etc.) with limited attention, in terms of actual resource flows, to the more productive sectors that hold the greatest promise for wealth creation. The debate around “indigenisation,” for example, is still subdued and often misses the reality that opening up the economy to unbridled foreign direct investment could be part of a positive pro-poor growth and development strategy. While recognising that UNDP worldwide is traditionally not known (and may not even have the mandate) to openly take on governments on policies that may be injurious to growth and re-distributional gains, the fact that UNDP-Zimbabwe has gotten into the “economic boxing ring” when, under ZUNDAF, it targeted “enhanced economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies” means that it has to learn how to throw blows, as it were, without appearing to be intransigent otherwise its strategic focus at this level will yield limited positive results.
5. In order to better manage resources in a manner that is more responsive to addressing poverty reduction, there is considerable scope for UNDP, through its advisory services to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, for supporting processes towards restructuring the Government Budget. In particular, the crucial role of the social sectors in the process of Sustainable Human Development needs to be accorded recognition in terms of resource allocation prioritisation in the Budget. The consolidation of the planning and budgeting functions also needs to be addressed to ensure that activities are aligned to the available resources envelope.
6. This Evaluation established the critical importance of monitoring, evaluation and reporting to the success of development planning, generally, and to the attainment of the desired Outcomes across all the Projects analysed. Effective reporting and monitoring of the activities under ZUNDAF are critical functions of delivery and, when well handled, could contribute towards the monitoring of MDGs attainment. Firstly, these processes provide essential data and insights for drawing lessons, priority setting and forward planning. Secondly, they offer the assurance that funds are used for agreed purposes. Good quality financial reporting is critical to the effective implementation UNDP-supported interventions and to accountability in the use of resources. There is a distinction between *implementation monitoring* that involves oversight at the level of processes and the registered progress with respect to the timely use of the budgeted resources (which seems to currently dominates the monitoring function under UNDP), and *results monitoring*, which concerns the measurement of

results and the attainment of the set goals/Outcomes. Both levels of monitoring ought to be strengthened and UNDP needs to re-tool its instruments at this level. In the light of this, Government, with the help of Cooperating Partners (including UNDP) should be encouraged to work towards strengthening the reporting and monitoring systems at both the macro and sector levels in ways that would allow it to fully capture the total public expenditure. In order to improve upon the reporting and monitoring functions, the following are recommended to constitute the main strategies:

- (a) In monitoring both macro-and sector-level performance, the Government and Cooperating Partners ought to use the performance indicators that are included in the National Development Strategy (Zim Asset), which is currently being reviewed to give it an operational feel. This should entail the tracking of changes in the overall macro and sectoral performance, focusing on both resource use/application and, most importantly, on Outcomes and impact. In this regard, the next ZUNDAF, in general, and UNDP activities therein, in particular, should strive to align performance indicators to those that will be developed for Zim Asset.
- (b) A common monitoring framework should be agreed upon between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and all major stakeholders, including the Cooperating Partners, and the performance indicators should always be kept simple, specific, measurable, time-bound, achievable, realistic, and easily verifiable.
- (c) Government should be assisted to ensure that sector and project reporting and monitoring requirements under Zim Asset feed into the Strategy's overall reporting and monitoring system and that their timing is synchronized with key planning cycles, including Ministry of Finance budget process and the Zim Asset's Annual Progress Reviews.
- (d) In the spirit of the emerging stress on results-based management (RBM), Outcome and impact monitoring system should be strengthened, focusing on (a) the improvement of ZIMSTAT's data collection function; (b) the timeliness and quality of processing, analysis and publication/dissemination of the data; and (c) the utilization of Outcome monitoring results in policy-making and resource allocation. The strengthening of the Government's economic/development planning as well as the planning units of sector ministries should receive priority attention when UNDP support is extended to the Government through the next ZUNDAF.

### 6.1.2 Consolidation of Economic growth and opportunities

To increase access to investment, employment and economic opportunities in key value chains and sectors, the UN is encouraged to support investment promotion initiatives; industrialisation; entrepreneurship development through SMEs and Cooperatives; and community-based economic empowerment programmes for women, youth and poor communities. In this regard, opportunities for investments, employment creation and empowerment ought to be pursued through green economy initiatives; production and market business linkages; livelihoods support and value-chain upgrading and facilitating transition from informality to formality; as well as through diaspora engagement. The UNDP is further encouraged to also sequence support for skills transfer, technology adaptation and innovation, and the use of ICTs to enhance access to economic opportunities, including access to new markets and investments from the diaspora.

### 6.1.3 Revisiting UNDP Capacity Development Effort

1. Across all the Projects that are covered in this Evaluation, the issue of capacity building in UNDP support to Zimbabwe comes out prominently. To the extent that capacity building is a complex phenomenon that includes actors beyond the traditional state sector, this Evaluation recommends that the involvement of all stakeholders beyond the Government be promoted. There is need for a 'home-grown' capacity building effort. In other words, initiatives towards capacity building ought to be

driven by client demand, an aspect that borders on local *ownership* of the process. The entry of UNDP capacity building effort should, therefore, be performed in the context of this comprehensive national effort.

2. There is need within Government and within the UNDP Office to better appreciate and contextualise what capacity building support for pro-poor development planning, implementation and monitoring should actually entail in both its organisational and human resource development context. Proper sequencing of interventions is also needed to ensure that priority interventions that are prerequisite to further interventions are allowed to come up-front.
3. The use of expatriate TAs as a first choice rather than a last alternative should be discouraged since technical assistance must be designed to focus, first and foremost, on building domestic capacity and institutions. Thus, TA should be used to complement rather than displace local capacities. In the light of this and as UNDP intensifies its support to capacity enhancement, TA must be defined by, and supportive of, national efforts and that, rather than being an isolated component of aid, it ought to be carefully calibrated into, and become an integral part of, Zimbabwe's national planning, in general, and human resource development strategy, in particular.
4. To complement the existing capacity building effort under the current ZUNDAF, UNDP needs to look at both institutional and human resource capacity enhancement in a more holistic manner than what seems to have been the case thus far. This would address the current challenge whereby the country's human resources are grossly under-utilised and unutilised.
5. As part of its institutional capacity enhancement, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development ought to consider the establishment of a dependable management structure for the Ministry that is sufficiently equipped to marshal the required policy and strategic macroeconomic reforms with an eye on enhanced poverty-reducing effects. Similarly, the Ministry's institutional capacity to manage the economy (including the enhancement of its *supervisory* function) should be supported by a highly motivated team of managers that would provide policy and strategy direction at the senior level.
6. There is need for more focused interventions to improve the country's Public Financial Management System (PFMS) through a well thought-out public expenditure management and financial accountability programme. Such a programme should target the improvement of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the management and utilisation of public financial resources in a manner that would better support the implementation of Zim Asset. A dependable PFMS should bring some level of comfort among Cooperating Partners, including UNDP, regarding their use of national systems and procedures in the management of external resources.

#### 6.1.4 Consolidation of UNDP Achievements during current UNDAF

1. In the light of the new reorientation towards results-based management (RBM) and having reviewed the current ZUNDAF indices for monitoring progress, it is recommended that UNDP strives to improve its programming tools and assumptions to ensure that the Outcomes that are identified in the CPD and CPAP are both accurate and realistic and that they do reflect the essence and spirit of the shift from focusing monitoring on Outputs to targeting Outcomes. When handled properly, this would not only help better monitor progress but, equally important, it will enable the Organisation identify appropriate interventions/activities that best offer opportunity for realising the intended impact.
2. During the 2016-2020 ZUNDAF, the UNDP should seek to build on its achievements during the current ZUNDAF by further enhancing the capacities of key IPs and RPs institutions to formulate and implement socio-economic policies, strategies and programmes for improved investment, value chain and industrial development. In this regard, capacity building initiatives ought to target key

Government ministries and departments, the private sector and other stakeholders. Similarly, UNDP support should be extended towards national and sectoral dialogue initiatives to ensure policy coherence and coordination. The UN will also specifically support the generation, analysis and use of key economic data and evidence through policy researches to support decision making.

3. The inclusion in one of the supported Projects of the component on MDG monitoring and reporting, and Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) development is important in that it aims to address some of the challenges faced by Zimbabwe towards accelerated MDGs attainment. To address the still persistent challenge associated with the existence of fairly dated statistical databases both within the Government system and outside, UNDP should redesign and reorient its support to the NSS in a way that minimised the adverse effects its accounting and procurement procedures have occasioned under ZIMSTAT support. In this regard, it is recommended as follows:
  - (a) UNDP should strive to build the capacity of IPs and RPs in financial accounting and reporting and, to the extent possible, progressively align its processes to local systems. The introduction of HACT is highly recommended in this regard.
  - (b) UNDP should work towards utilising national procurement systems in its dealings with the Government of Zimbabwe and locally-based IPs and RPs.
4. UNDP support for increased capacity for MDG- based planning, awareness and commitment to the MDGs should be enhanced and all teething problems that have characterised the smooth implementation of the relevant activities under the current ZUNDAF identified and addressed as a matter of urgency. This is because there is no alternative to the direct engagement of the many national and local level actors that must be brought into the fold as the country goes for MDG-based planning that is founded on RBM. In this regard, the development of the capacity of local actors to enhance their participation in planning and implementation of national programmes should be among the prime targets of UNDP interventions at this level.
5. UNDP should enhance its resolve to support the renewed Government commitment to improving aid management and coordination. In this regard, the Organisation is urged to continue working closely with the Government in its renewed effort to develop an appropriate framework on Development Cooperation. In the same vein, Government should be supported in its renewed resolve to develop a framework that would facilitate positive dialogue with Cooperating Partners.
6. As part of the next ZUNDAF, a clear programme of UNDP support is recommended for strengthening Government institutional capacity for debt management, which should include work towards the development and operationalisation of a Debt Management Strategy. A clear roadmap for a debt arrears clearance strategy should be made part of the areas worth of UNDP support. Overall, External assistance should strive, through advisory services, to assist Government to ensure that it keeps debts to manageable and sustainable levels. In the light of this, Government ought to be convinced that any new borrowing should be aligned to Zimbabwe's capacity to repay and on terms that would not unduly expose the country to preventable risk of defaulting. In particular, UNDP capacity building effort ought to be directed towards securing prudential contraction and management of external loans. As part of this, Government should be supported, through technical advice, to ensure that more debt oversight authority is extended to Parliament.
7. UNDP should increasingly rely on its strong convening power to bring together the Government, development partners and civil society organisations towards delivering a better future for Zimbabwe. In the same context and as the main Cooperating Partner active in Zimbabwe presently, UNDP is urged to assume the brokering role of facilitating the creation of an effective dialogue mechanism that brings Government and Cooperating Partners together to meaningfully initiate the much needed

dialogue over the developmental route the country should take and towards which Cooperating Partners should channel resources. Such dialogue architecture should aim to simplify working relationships, foster flexibility, and facilitate better structured communication within the Government system, between the Government and its Cooperating Partners, and among Cooperating Partners themselves.

8. There is need to have a verifiable ‘feedback system’ that ensures that the identified challenges during implementation and weaknesses noted in the implementation systems and processes as well as learned experiences are properly captured and used towards future improvements in project execution. An effective feedback system with a built-in follow-up mechanism is, therefore, recommended for all the projects that are supported by UNDP in Zimbabwe. In this regard, all project boards and steering committees should make a conscious effort to develop follow-up systems that track implementation and which promptly take corrective action when implementation challenges emerge on *both* the Government and donor sides.
9. To the extent that the efficacy of frameworks and strategies used by UNDP can be compromised by the environment within which they are applied, it is imperative that such frameworks and strategies are reviewed and altered/reoriented periodically to accommodate the ever-changing conditions in Zimbabwe. The frequency with which such reviews are made may determine the continued appropriateness, even relevance, of UNDP support to the country.
10. The pursuit of outcomes on employment creation and economic empowerment will enable the country to fulfil its international, continental and regional obligations to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress. These obligations are contained in the several UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolutions and stem from various international covenants, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
11. During the next ZUNDAF, UNDP should integrate the emerging Post-2015 Agenda on sustainable development, especially the goals on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere; achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls; promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth; and assisting Government to facilitate full and productive employment and decent work for all. With poverty and unemployment mostly affecting women and youths, UNDP should support the delivering of employment and economic empowerment opportunities, especially for women. Such action would also ensure that Zimbabwe meets its obligations under the framework of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Related to this and in line with the new thinking under the framework of the Post 2015 Agenda, the UNDP should continue with advocacy on the integration of employment as a key macro-economic target to ensure employment-friendly investments for inclusive growth and development. The private sector, as the main source of economic activity, should be called upon as a key contributor to sustainable development.

#### 6.1.5 Addressing Governance Issues in Project Programming and Implementation

1. The UN System, in general, and UNDP, in particular, should strive to promote the principles of country ownership and leadership and, to the extent possible, allow national systems and processes assume the lead from project conceptualisation to design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. It is by so doing that project/programme relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP-supported interventions can be assured. In this regard, the following considerations are recommended:
  - (a) A more inclusive process should be adopted during the design on ZUNDAF, CPD and CPAP involving as many strategic stakeholders (including Government) as possible. This would allow those involved to associate themselves with the planning/programming product, an aspect that

would help enlist the needed consensus at the level of implementation and the monitoring of progress.

- (b) UNDP should strive to adhere to the principle of *mutual* accountability, which calls for clearly defined commitments on both sides of the aid relationship. It also calls on Cooperating Partners not to crowd out the mutual accountability agenda with their own demands in ways that could leave the Government at the receiving end of donor procedures and protocols. UNDP (both in-country and HQ) should, in this regard, offer itself to being called upon to account for weaknesses in its own camp when these begin to affect the very ideals and objectives that informed its support to the country.
2. In order to enhance good corporate governance, RPs in charge of project implementation should not be made members of the committees/boards that provide oversight over their activities as this would make them answerable to themselves. In this regard, it is recommended that the RPs for the different components of the *Towards 2015* Project are removed as members of the supervisory committee.
3. The management arrangements for all the Projects reviewed in this Evaluation state that UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures must be used. The adoption of financial accounting and procurement procedures of UNDP are also part of the standard protocol of project management. It is recommended that a conscious effort be made to progressively move away from these practices in preference for the use of national systems as defined by the Government. Where there are clear cases of fiduciary challenges with respect to the integrity and transparency of the accounting and/or procurement systems, a timeline ought to be agreed upon for moving away from systems that are parallel to those of Government. During this transitory period, the domestication of UNDP systems to the national ones should be undertaken and tailor-made capacity enhancement programmes for RPs and IPs launched to ensure that they are sufficiently knowledgeable about the use of transparent accounting and procurement systems that are in use.

## **6.2 Lessons Learnt**

1. Capacity limitations in the field of economic management have the adverse effect of compromising the prospects for national development, in general, and pro-poor growth, in particular. A strengthened Public Financial Management System is particularly important for efficient and effective national resource management and utilisation and could be catalytic in the attraction of development finance from outside the country.
2. Weaknesses in planning and monitoring capacity of the central authority do set risks to the attainment of the set Outcomes. Capacity weaknesses in the apex economic ministry, in particular, have the effect of making national plans to be implemented in uncoordinated manner.
3. Weak monitoring and reporting reduces the capacity of national systems to learn from their performance record and reduces their ability to derive valuable lessons from implementation challenges and successes. Similarly, parallel systems of reporting and accountability inhibit effective implementation of interventions and possess the potential to reduce the achievement of desirable Outcomes.
4. Country ownership of, and national leadership over, the Development Agenda is essential and is a more sustainable way for national progress.
5. While growth is important for poverty reduction, it is never sufficient. A real dent on poverty requires much more than economic growth and has to include better targeting of resources as well as improved management of interventions, which includes effective monitoring of performance.
6. To secure the sustainability of development programmes, decentralisation is essential for it constitutes an effective vehicle for enlisting lower level inputs. Limited involvement of sub-national authorities and community level stakeholders in planning, implementation and monitoring of performance

reduces the capacity to deliver positive Outcomes which, in turn, affects accelerated achievement of MDGs.

7. There is a higher likelihood of positively addressing poverty when priority in resource allocation is targeted at the sectors that house the largest number of people (e.g. agriculture).
8. The private sector is strategic in economic development and its enhancement through the provision of a hospitable environment for its growth does spur the much needed developmental resources. Close partnership between the government and private sector, thus, offers significant opportunities for pro-poor growth.
9. A strengthened supervisory function of the ministry in charge of finance is essential for a more harmonised and coordinated approach to programme implementation and reduces fragmentation in macro-level development planning and management. It also maximises prospects for enhanced proactive interaction between that central ministry and sector ministries.
10. An efficient, cost-effective, transparent, and accountable procurement services is important in social services delivery.

## ***Appendices***

**Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe: Project results 2012**

| Output  | Fully achieved | Partially achieved |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Policy advisory and technical services provided  |                |                    |
| 2. Macroeconomic model development and staff trained  |                |                    |
| 3. One stop investment centre strengthened  |                |                    |
| 4. 2012 National MDG progress report produced   |                |                    |
| 5. NHDR preparation process completed   |                |                    |
| 6. MDG Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) on goal 2 developed  |                |                    |
| 7. MDG resource centre fully equipped and operational   |                |                    |
| 8. National MDG structure reviewed and operational  |                |                    |
| 9. Parliament of Zimbabwe capacitated for holding the government accountable for the MDGs               |                |                    |
| 10. Capacities of civil society organizations in mainstreaming MDG and MDG related programming enhanced |                |                    |
| 11. Public awareness, engagement and access to MDG related information increased                        |                |                    |
| 12. MDG virtual learning platform established and operational   |                |                    |
| 13. MDG accelerated plans negotiated and agreed in 3 districts  |                |                    |
| 14. Capacity at local authority and districts planning and budgeting units enhanced                     |                |                    |
| 15. Capacity of community representatives to engage with other stakeholders on MDGs                     |                |                    |
| 16. Financial mechanisms LCDF for MDG focused activities assessed and agreed upon by stakeholders       |                |                    |

Source: Towards 2015; Annual Progress report 2012

**Towards 2015: Supporting MTP Implementation and MDG achievement in Zimbabwe: Project results 2013**

| Output  | Fully achieved | Partially achieved | Not achieved |
|---|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. Pro-poor policy processes supported and reports produced   |                |                    |              |
| 2. Technical capacities for selected Economists in Macroeconomic Policy Analysis enhanced   |                |                    |              |
| 3. Draft Investment Promotion Strategy and action plan developed  |                |                    |              |
| 4. 2013 MTP Implementation Report developed, published and disseminated.  |                |                    |              |
| 5. 2012 National MDG progress report launched and disseminated  |                |                    |              |
| 6. Consultations on post 2015 development agenda  |                |                    |              |
| 7. MDG Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) launched and implementation monitor  |                |                    |              |
| 8. National MDG steering committee operational  |                |                    |              |
| 9. MDGs resource centre operational   |                |                    |              |
| 10. Increased capacities of Parliament of Zimbabwe and Civil Society Organizations to monitor the MDGs and MTP and to inform a new development agenda |                |                    |              |
| 11. The public and community based organisations strengthened to participate effectively in MTP and MDG policy and practice                           |                |                    |              |
| 12. Increased engagement with and awareness to the MDG Virtual Learning Centre  |                |                    |              |
| 13. Local MDG acceleration plans agreed in 7 districts  |                |                    |              |
| 14. Improved planning and budgeting capacity at local authority and District levels for achievement of priority MDGs                                  |                |                    |              |
| 15. Community representatives (m/f) and private sector to actively engage in the implementation of MDG Plans  |                |                    |              |
| 16. Financing mechanism (LCDF) for MDG focused activities assessed and agreed by stakeholders   |                |                    |              |

Source: Towards 2015; Annual progress report 2013

### Commentary on the UNDP CPAP Outcomes and Indicators

| Priority Area  | Stated ZUNDAF Outcome  | Stated CPAP Outcome   | Stated Outcome level Indicators   | Comments by Consultants   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Pro-poor Sustainable Growth and Economic Development | Enhanced Economic Management and Pro-Poor Development Policies and Strategies  | National pro-poor and MDG responsive development strategies developed and implemented | 1. Number of new gender sensitive pro-poor & MDG strategies developed                                 | Firstly, it is important that the CPAP Outcomes must be expressed in exactly the same way as the ZUNDAF Outcomes otherwise measurability becomes problematic especially if there is a significant difference between what the ZUNDAF and CPAP give as their Outcomes. Secondly, what is given as the CPAP Outcome reads as if it is an indicator with implied targets. Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, The states Outcome indicator is, strictly speaking, an output (i.e. Number of new gender sensitive pro-poor & MDG strategies). <i>Outcomes</i> are the medium-term results of one or several activities. They are what the immediate outputs of the activities are expected to lead to. Outcomes are, therefore, mostly expressed for a set of activities. |
|  |  |   | 2. Number of programmes developed to support implementation of pro-poor strategies                    | Similarly, as in the case above, the number of programmes developed cannot be an outcome. The number would only show how many programmes have been developed and the actual effects/results of such programmes (which would be the Outcomes).   |
|  |  | Institutions for economic management strengthened                                     | 1. PFMS in place and decentralised to local government structures.                                    | This 'Outcome' indicator does not speak to the goal (which would be the outcome) towards which the presence of PFMS would lead. In other words, mere presence of PFMS does not say anything about the attainment of an outcome. In addition, GoZ already has a public financial management system. It is how strong it is that is the issue and which calls for capacity enhancement. What is stated is an output, not outcome.   |
|  |  |   | 2. Level of coordination and implementation of national programmes                                    | This too is not an Outcome indicator. The 'level' should be defined/stated  |
|  | Improved generation and Utilization of Data for policy and programme development and implementation by government and other partners | Increased availability of updated data on poverty and economy                         | 1. % of sectoral routine information systems that are functional and supplying timely data to ZIMSTAT | This is an output   |
|  |  |   | 2. % of household surveys whose results are produced and disseminated on time                         | This is an output   |

## Terms of Reference

### Outcome Evaluation: Enhanced Economic Management and Pro-poor Development Policies and Strategies

#### 1. Background

UNDP's corporate policy is to evaluate its development cooperation with the host government on a regular basis in order to assess whether and how UNDP-funded interventions contribute to the achievement of agreed outcomes, i.e. changes in the development situation and ultimately in people's lives. Evaluating country programming therefore involves ascertaining whether and how UNDP has assisted in improving human development conditions, including for individuals, institutions and systems. Evaluation also helps to clarify underlying factors affecting development, to identify unintended consequences (positive and negative), to generate lessons learned and to recommend actions to improve performance in future programming. These terms of reference are for an outcome evaluation of UNDP's support to Zimbabwe in the area of enhanced economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies.

The socio-economic decline of 2000-2008 left Zimbabwe with a number of grave development challenges across all sector of the economy. Before the crisis, Zimbabwe had made significant progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The crisis significantly slowed down and in some cases even reversed the MDG achievements, and caused extensive capacity erosion and deterioration of structures and systems that support effective economic management and strategic planning. After the establishment of the Government of National Unity in February 2009, the Government of Zimbabwe created a number of ministries to coordinate and manage economic planning and development. The key ministries for economic management and pro-poor development included the Ministry of Economic Planning & Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Regional Integration & international Cooperation, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce.

The national response to these challenges included the development of the Medium Term Plan 2011-2015 which became the national development strategy to reduce poverty through inclusive growth by creating decent employment and promoting entrepreneurial development. The MTP's main goals were to transform the economy, reduce poverty, create jobs, maintain macro-economic stability and restore national capacity to produce goods and services competitively. The implementation strategy for the MTP was to achieve economic growth through transforming the economy from largely producer of primary commodities to producer of commodities with value addition through the development of new knowledge based industries through a private sector led model.

Following the July 2013 elections, the new government revised and updated the national development plan. The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) was launched in October 2013 as the new national development strategy. Zim Asset is driven by a Results-Based Management (RBM) agenda formulated around four strategic clusters that will enable Zimbabwe achieve economic growth and reposition itself as one of the strongest economies 2 in the region and Africa. The four strategic clusters are: Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation. It is hoped that the cluster approach will enable Government to better prioritise its national development programmes for speedier implementation in addressing national challenges.

The UNDP Country Programme for Zimbabwe 2012-2015 was developed in keeping with the economic and political challenges facing the country. The programme was designed to be flexible so that UNDP could respond to emerging requests for support as the country recovered. The programme was developed to address the ZUNDAF (2012-2015) priorities in line with the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) strategic focus on capacity development for pro-poor growth and accountability (CD-PGA). The programme was also guided by UNDP corporate strategic focus on a) poverty reduction and MDG achievement, b) democratic governance, c) crisis prevention and recovery and d) environment and sustainable development as well as the UNDP's comparative advantages.

UNDP's Pro-Poor Sustainable Growth and Economic Development programme was introduced to support capacity development for economic transition to development at all levels as well as MDG-based planning and MDG localisation, which were central to the country's economic and human development. The Programme was designed to support efforts towards the attainment of the country's Millennium Development Goals priorities. In addition, the programme aimed to support the restoration and transformation of institutional capacities that have an impact on the achievement of poverty reduction and broad based equitable economic growth and development. The programme also was established to help strengthen institutional capacities to better manage development processes and coordinate support from development partners.

Under the overall umbrella of achieving the MDGs by 2015, and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIM ASSET) 2013-2018, the UNDP country programme supports Zimbabwe by promoting economic reforms and early recovery for sustainable livelihoods.

#### 2. Evaluation Purpose

UNDP commissions outcome evaluations to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of its contributions to development results at the country level as articulated in both the Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) and UNDP country programme document (CPD). These are evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP

Evaluation Policy. In line with the Evaluation Plan of UNDP Zimbabwe, outcome evaluations are being conducted in 2014 to assess the impact of UNDP's development assistance across the major thematic and cross cutting areas of good governance, pro poor sustainable growth, and sound management and use of the environment.

The UNDP Office in Zimbabwe is commissioning this evaluation on economic management and pro-poor policies and strategies to capture evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of current programming, which can be used to strengthen existing programmes and to set the stage for new initiatives. The evaluations serves an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Zimbabwe with an impartial assessment of the results of UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor development. 3

### **3. Evaluation Scope and Objectives**

The outcome evaluation will be conducted during the months of July and August 2014, with a view that results will contribute to the improvement of the implementation of the programme and provide strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the new UNDP country programme and the next ZUNDAF, both scheduled to start in 2015.

Specifically, the outcome evaluation will assess:

- 1) The relevance and strategic position of UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor initiatives
- 2) The frameworks and strategies that UNDP has devised for its support on economic management and pro-poor initiatives, including partnership strategies, and whether they are well conceived for achieving planned objectives.
- 3) The progress made towards achieving outcomes, through specific projects and advisory services, including contributing factors and constraints
- 4) The progress to date under these outcomes and what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future UNDP support to Zimbabwe on economic management and pro-poor development.

This evaluation will consider the pertinent country programme outcomes and outputs listed under ZUNDAF 2.1. Enhanced economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies, as stated in the ZUNDAF and the 2012-2015 country programme document (CPD) for Zimbabwe. The specific outcomes under ZUNDAF 2.1. to be assessed are:

1. National pro-poor and MDG responsive development strategies developed and implemented
2. Institutions for economic management strengthened

As described in Annex 1, the UNDP Zimbabwe country office has implemented three projects that reside within these outcomes. An analysis of achievements across these three projects is expected.

### **4. Evaluation Questions**

The outcome evaluation will analyse:

#### *Relevance:*

- Has UNDP been influential in national debates on economic management and poverty in Zimbabwe and has it contributed to national priorities?
- To what extent is UNDP's engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including UNDP's role in a particular development context in Zimbabwe and its comparative advantage vis-a-vis other partners?
- To what extent was UNDP's selected method of delivery appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent have UN reforms influenced the relevance of UNDP support to the Government of Zimbabwe in the economic management and pro-poor development sector?

#### *Effectiveness*

- To what extent has UNDP been effective in supporting local initiatives for MDG fulfillment? Considered in aggregate, are these local initiatives producing nationally significant results?
- Has UNDP been effective in advocating best practices and desired goals?
- What evidence is there that UNDP support has contributed towards an improvement in national government capacity, including institutional strengthening?
- What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede UNDP performance in this area?
- Taking into account the technical capacity and institutional arrangements of the UNDP country office, is UNDP well suited to providing economic management and pro-poor initiatives in Zimbabwe?
- Is UNDP perceived by stakeholders as a strong advocate for improving economic management and conditions of poverty in Zimbabwe?
- How effective has UNDP been in partnering with development partners, civil society and private sector to strengthen its economic management and pro-poor development programme?
- Has UNDP utilised innovative techniques and best practices in its programming in this area?

#### *Efficiency*

- To what extent have the programme or project outputs been efficient and cost effective?
- Has there been an economical use of resources?
- Are the monitoring and evaluation systems that UNDP has in place helping to ensure that programmes are managed efficiently and effectively?

- Has UNDP been efficient in building synergies and leveraging with other programmes and stakeholders in Zimbabwe?

#### *Sustainability*

- What is the likelihood that the economic management and pro-poor development initiatives which UNDP has supported are sustainable?
- What mechanisms have been set in place by UNDP to support the government of Zimbabwe to sustain improvements made through these economic management and pro-poor development interventions?
- How should the portfolio of activities be enhanced to support central authorities, local communities and civil society in improving service delivery over the long term?
- What changes should be made in the current set of partnerships with national institutions, CSOs, UN Agencies, private sector and other development partners in Zimbabwe, in order to promote long term sustainability?

All evaluation questions should include an assessment of the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross cutting issues into consideration:

#### *Human rights*

- To what extent do the poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefit from UNDP's work in poverty?

#### *Gender Equality*

- To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of economic management and pro-poor development projects? Is gender marker data assigned to projects representative of reality (focus should be placed on gender marker 2 and 3 projects)?
- To what extent has UNDP support on economic management and pro-poor development promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects? Information collected should be checked against data from the UNDP country office' Results-oriented Annual Reports (ROAR) during the period 2012 - 2015.

Based on the above analysis, the evaluators are expected to provide overarching conclusions on UNDP results in this area of support, as well as recommendations on how UNDP Zimbabwe Country Office should adjust its programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities to ensure that the economic management and pro-poor development portfolio fully achieves its outcomes by the end of the ZUNDAF period and is positioned for sustainable results in the future. The evaluation is additionally expected to offer wider lessons for UNDP support in Zimbabwe and elsewhere based on this analysis. .

### **5. Methodology**

The outcome evaluation will be carried out by an external team of evaluators, and will engage a wide array of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including national and local government officials, donors, civil society organizations, academics and subject experts, private sector representatives and community members.

The outcome evaluation is expected to take a "theory of change" (TOC) approach to determining causal links between the interventions that UNDP has supported, and observed progress in economic management and pro-poor initiatives at national and local levels in Zimbabwe. The evaluators will develop a logic model of how UNDP interventions in this area are expected to lead to improved national and local government management and service delivery. In the case of the two outcomes for Zimbabwe being assessed, a theory of change was not explicitly defined when the outcomes were established. The evaluators are expected to construct a theory of change for each of the outcomes, based against stated objectives and anticipated results, and more generally from UNDPs global poverty reduction and capacity development strategies and techniques.

Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of UNDP support should be triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, evaluations and technical papers, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys and site visits.

The following steps in data collection are anticipated:

#### **5.1 Desk Review**

A desk review should be carried out of the key strategies and documents underpinning the work of UNDP in Zimbabwe in support of economic management and pro-poor development. This includes reviewing the ZUNDAF and pertinent country programme documents, as well as a wide array of monitoring and evaluation documents, to be provided by the UNDP country office.

The evaluators are expected to review pertinent strategies and reports developed by the Government of Zimbabwe that are relevant to UNDPs support on economic management and pro-poor development. This includes the government's Mid-Term Plan (MTP), the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), and other national reports, to be made available by the UNDP country office.

The evaluators will examine all relevant documentation concerning the 3 projects implemented within the economic management and pro-poor development area, including project TORs, evaluations, and technical assessment reports. The three projects are listed in Annex 1.

#### **5.2 Field Data Collection**

Following the desk review, the evaluators will build on the documented evidence through an agreed set of field and interview methodologies, including:

- Interviews with key partners and stakeholders
- Field visits to project sites and partner institutions
- Survey questionnaires where appropriate
- Participatory observation, focus groups, and rapid appraisal techniques

## 6. Deliverables

The following reports and deliverables are required for the evaluation:

- Inception report
- Draft Economic Management and Pro-poor Development Outcome Evaluation Report
- Presentation at the validation workshop with key stakeholders, (partners and beneficiaries)
- Final Economic Management and Pro-poor Development Outcome Evaluation report

The consultant will be supervised by the AAR Poverty Reduction. One week after contract signing, the evaluation manager will produce an **inception report** containing the proposed theory of change for UNDPs work on economic management and pro-poor development in Zimbabwe. The inception report should include an evaluation matrix presenting the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods to be used. Annex 3 provides a simple matrix template. The inception report should detail the specific timing for evaluation activities and deliverables, and propose specific site visits and stakeholders to be interviewed. Protocols for different stakeholders should be developed. The inception report will be discussed and agreed with the UNDP country office before the evaluators proceed with site visits.

The **draft evaluation report** will be shared with stakeholders, and presented in a validation workshop, that the UNDP country office will organise. Feedback received from these sessions should be taken into account when preparing the final report. The evaluators will produce an 'audit trail' indicating whether and how each comment received was addressed in revisions to the

### final report.

The suggested table of contents of the evaluation report is as follows:

- I. Title
- II. Table of Contents
- III. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations
- IV. Executive Summary
- V. Introduction
- VI. Description of the intervention
- VII. Evaluation Scope and Objectives
- VIII. Evaluation approach and methods
- IX. Data Analysis
- X. Findings and conclusions
- XI. Recommendations
- XII. Lessons Learned
- XIII. Annexes

## 7. Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies

The outcome evaluation will be undertaken by 2 external evaluators, hired as consultants, comprised of an Evaluation Manager and an Associate Evaluator. Both international and national consultants can be considered for these positions. 7

### Required Qualifications of the Evaluation Manager

- Minimum Master's degree in economics, public administration, regional development/planning or any other social sciences related to economic management and pro-poor development;
- At least 5 years of international experience in conducting outcome evaluations in the economic development area or evaluations of programmes focused on accountability, and capacity development or a number of at least 5 evaluation processes;
- Strong working knowledge of UNDP and its mandate, the civil society and working with government authorities;
- Extensive knowledge of results-based management evaluation, as well as participatory M&E methodologies and approaches;
- Experience in applying SMART (S Specific; M Measurable; A Achievable; R Relevant; T Time-bound) indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Minimum 10-15 years of professional experience in the area of development, including gender equality and social policies;
- Strong reporting and communication skills;
- Excellent communication skills with various partners including donors;
- Knowledge on mainstreaming Gender and Human rights in projects and programmes desired; and,
- Previous experience on UNDP outcome evaluations desired.

The **Evaluation Manager** will have overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the final evaluation report. Specifically, the Evaluation Manager will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology and approach;
- Ensure efficient division of tasks between the mission members;
- Conduct the outcome evaluation in accordance with the proposed objective and scope of the evaluation and UNDP evaluation guidelines;
- Draft and present the Inception Report, and the draft and final evaluation reports;
- Finalize the evaluation report and submit it to UNDP

#### **Required Qualifications of the Associate Evaluator**

- Has extensive experience working in Zimbabwe during the last 5 years
- Minimum Master's degree in the social sciences
- Have at least 5 years' experience in evaluation process and techniques
- Have strong communication skills
- Have good experience in working in UN agencies will be an added advantage
- Have excellent reading and writing skills in English
- Have a strong understanding of the development context in Zimbabwe and preferably understanding of the strategic economic management and pro-poor development issues within the Zimbabwe context.

The Associate Evaluator will, *inter alia*, perform the following tasks:

- Review documents;
- Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
- Conduct the outcome evaluation in accordance with the proposed objectives and scope of the evaluation;
- Draft related parts of the evaluation report as agreed with the Evaluation Manager; and
- Assist the Evaluation Manager in finalizing the draft and final evaluation report.

#### **8. Evaluation Ethics**

The evaluation must be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' and sign the Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP Evaluations. In particular, evaluators must be free and clear of perceived conflicts of interest. To this end, interested consultants will not be considered if they were directly and substantively involved, as an employee or consultant, in the formulation of UNDP strategies and programming relating to the outcomes and programmes under review. The code of conduct and an agreement form to be signed by each consultant are included in Annex 4.

#### **Implementation Arrangements**

The UNDP Zimbabwe country office will select the evaluation team, and will be responsible for the management of the evaluators. UNDP will designate a focal point for the evaluation and any additional staff to assist in facilitating the process (e.g., providing relevant documentation, arranging visits/interviews with key informants, etc.). The Country Office will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report. The M&E Specialist in the Country Office will arrange introductory meetings within UNDP and Unit Heads will establish initial contacts with government partners and project staff. The consultants will take responsibility for setting up meetings and conducting the evaluation, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. The UNDP country office will develop a management response to the evaluation within six weeks of report finalization.

While the Country Office will provide some logistical support during the evaluation, for instance assisting in setting interviews with senior government officials, it will be the responsibility of the evaluators to logistically and financially arrange their travel to and from relevant project sites and to arrange most interviews. Planned travels and associated costs will be included in the Inception Report, and agreed with the Country Office.

Subsequent to the completion of this outcome evaluation, the full UNDP Zimbabwe programme will be evaluated by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office. Zimbabwe is one of six countries to receive an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in 2014. The IEO carries out these country programme assessments in the year prior to new UNDAF's and CPDs being established. This outcome evaluation on economic management and pro-poor development support will be an important source of information for the Zimbabwe ADR. The UNDP Independent Evaluation Office may request to extend the contracts of the evaluators for this outcome evaluation to provide additional support to the ADR implementation during August through October 2014.

#### **9. Time-Frame for the Evaluation Process**

The evaluation is expected to take 22 working days for each of the two consultants, over a period of six weeks starting 22nd July 2014. A tentative date for the stakeholder workshop is 11th August, and the final draft evaluation report is due the 6th of September 2014. The following table provides an indicative breakout for activities and delivery:

| Activity  | Deliverable  | Work day allocation |                     | Time period (days) for task completion |
|---|--|---------------------|---------------------|--|
|   |  | Evaluation Manager  | Associate Evaluator |  |
| Review materials and develop work plan  | Inception report and evaluation matrix                       | 4                   | 3                   | 7                                      |
| Participate in an Inception Meeting with UNDP Zimbabwe country office                               |  |                     |                     |  |
| Draft inception report  |  |                     |                     |  |
| Review Documents and stakeholder consultations  | Draft evaluation report<br>Stakeholder workshop presentation | 13                  | 16                  | 30                                     |
| Interview stakeholders  |  |                     |                     |  |
| Conduct field visits  |  |                     |                     |  |
| Analyse data  |  |                     |                     |  |
| Develop draft evaluation report to Country Office   |  |                     |                     |  |
| Present draft Evaluation Report at Validation Workshop  | Final evaluation report                                      | 5                   | 3                   | 7                                      |
| Finalize and submit evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by stakeholders |  |                     |                     |  |
|   | totals   | 22                  | 22                  | 6 weeks                                |

## ANNEX 1 - LIST OF OUTCOMES TO BE EVALUATED

| ZUNDAF Outcome  | CPAP Outcomes   | CPAP Outputs   | Projects                                  |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Enhanced Economic Management and Pro-Poor Development Policies and Strategies</i>  | <b>Outcome 1</b><br>National pro-poor and MDG responsive development strategies developed and implemented                   | 1. National and sectorial development plans, strategies and policies supported within the national development plan (ZIMASSET) framework | 000079955<br>Accelerating MDG attainment  |
|   |   | 2. The formulation and implementation of MDG Accelerated Action Plan advocated for and supported   |   |
|   |   | 3. MDG progress monitored and reported and NHDR produced.  | 00079953<br>National statistics system    |
|   |   | 4. Integration of migration and population issues into national development policies and strategies.                                     |   |
|   | <b>Outcome 2</b><br>Institutions responsible for economic management and policy formulation and implementation strengthened | 1. Strengthened public finance management systems  | 0007952<br>Strengthen economic management |
|   |   | 2. Aid and development results coordination mechanisms revamped and integrated into national development planning processes              |   |
| 3. Strengthened skills, systems and processes for economic management in policy formulation, strategic planning and implementation. |   |  |   |

## Annex 2 - Project List

| No.       | Project Short Title            | Source of Funds | Total Budget (in US\$) | Implementing Agency | MTR or final evaluations conducted | Project Duration |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 000079955 | Accelerating MDG attainment    |                 |                        |                     |                                    |                  |
| 00079953  | National statistics system     |                 |                        |                     |                                    |                  |
| 00007952  | Strengthen economic management |                 |                        |                     |                                    |                  |

## ANNEX 3 - DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSULTED

- Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2012 – 2015
- ZUNDAF 2012-2015 Annual and mid-term review reports
- Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation Framework (ZIM ASSET) 2013-2018
- UNDP Country Programme Document 2012 – 2015
- UNDP Country Programme Action Plan 2012 – 2015
- UNDP PME Handbook
- UNDP Evaluation Guide and addendum
- UNDG RBM Handbook
- UNDG Ethical Code of Conduct of Evaluators
- Project Documents, reports and project evaluation reports
- Project Result and Resources Framework
- Other documents and materials related to the outcome to be evaluated (from the government, donors, research papers etc.)
- MDG 2012 Status Report
- Relevant ROARs

## ANNEX 4 - EVALUATION MATRIX

The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

| Relevant evaluation criteria | Key Questions | Specific Sub-Questions | Data Sources | Data collection Methods/Tools | Indicators/ Success Standard | Methods for Data Analysis |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                              |               |                        |              |                               |                              |                           |
|                              |               |                        |              |                               |                              |                           |

## People Interviewed

| Name                                 | Institution  | Designation   |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>UNDP AND COOPERATING PARTNERS</b> |  |   |
| 1. Ms Verity Nyaga                   | UNDP   | Country Director  |
| 2. Mr. Martim Maya                   | UNDP   | Deputy Country Director (Programmes)  |
| 3. Dr. Alex Zinanga                  | UNDP   | Assistant Resident Representative, Poverty Reduction and HIV                    |
| 4. Mr. Amarakoon Bandara             | UNDP   | Economic Advisor  |
| 5. Mr Paul Faran                     | RCO  | Strategic Planning Specialist-Head of UNRCO<br>UN Resident Coordinator's Office |
| 6. Ms. Sophie Conteh                 | UNDP   | Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist  |
| 7. Mr Ambrose Made                   | UNDP   | Project specialist  |
| 8. Dr. Gibson Guvheya                | UNDP   | Project Coordinator, ZIMSTAT  |
| 9. Mr. Udo Etekudo,                  | UNDP   | Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development                  |
| 10. Ms Doreen Nyamukapa              | UNDP   | Programme Officer -Gender   |
| 11. Ms Tafadzwa Muvingi              | UNDP   | Programme Specialist-Justice and Human Rights                                   |
| 12. Ms Amorllette Nyamweda           | UNDP   | Project Coordinator MoFED   |
| 13. Mr Johannes Herderschee          | World Bank   | Senior Economist  |
| 14. Mr Seedwell Hove                 | World Bank   | Economist   |
| 15. Mr Joshua Smith                  | USAID  | Economic Growth Officer   |
| 16. Ms. Anna Maria Penas-Segura      | European Union   | Trade Attache   |
| <b>GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE</b>        |  |   |
| 17. Mr Edwin Zvandasara              | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Acting Accountant General   |
| 18. Mr.Masiyanise                    | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Deputy Accountant General   |
| 19. Mrs. Margireta Makuvaza          | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Director, International Cooperation   |
| 20. Mr G Mukwakwami                  | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Principal Economist   |
| 21. Mr R Majero                      | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Principal Economist   |
| 22. Mr Tafadzwa Mushope              | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Principal Economist   |
| 23. Mr Brighton Shayanewako          | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Deputy Director –International Cooperation                                      |
| 24. Mr Vhezha                        | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development           | Economist   |
| 25. Ms Hazel Nyananhindi             | Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Services | Project Officer   |
| 26. Mr. Nyoni                        | ZIMSTAT  | Deputy Director- General  |
| 27. Mr Mupfugami                     | ZIMSTAT  | Project coordinator   |
| <b>NON STATE ACTORS</b>              |  |   |
| 28. Mr Machinda                      | NANGO  | Programmes Director   |
| 29. Mr Mandishora                    | NANGO  | Economist   |
| 30. Mr Minenhle Ngwenya              | SNV  | Senior Economic development Advisor   |

|                        |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 31. Mr Dowsen Sango    | SNV  | Agricultural Advisor –Monitoring and Evaluation |
| 32. Mr Verengai Mabika | Development Reality Institute (DRI)                      | Managing Director                               |
| 33. Mr Tawanda Maguze  | Development Reality Institute (DRI)                      | Programmes Manager                              |
| 34. Dr. Chigumira      | Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis Research Unit (ZEPARU) | Chief Executive Officer                         |
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