



**UN Resident Coordinator ai, Dr Alex Gasasira**

**Opening Remarks**

**SDGs Integration Workshop**

**Opening Session**

**8 October at 8:30 – 09:30**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Permanent Secretaries here present

Senior government officials

United Nations Officials

Colleagues and friends

- Allow me to greet you all and to extend a warm virtual welcome to Victoria Falls, ‘the smoke that thunders’
- It is a privilege to speak to you today on this very important convocation to on strengthening the integration of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals into the National Development Strategy (NDS1), 2021 to 2025
- Indeed, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals embody the strategic vision and aspirations of all countries for the future of development. The UN Secretary-General refers to this as the decade of action on SDGs and UN Member States such as Zimbabwe are redoubling their efforts to advance their development agendas.

- Given the centrality Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy in driving progress towards Vision 2030, it's critical to ensure that the ambitions of the SDGs are well integrated into the NDS1.
- The Agenda 2030 specifically calls for enhanced capacity-strengthening by the United Nations system and other multilateral institutions to support UN member states to attain the SDGs.
- The United Nations, World Bank (WB) and African Development Bank (AfDB) are committed to work together and ensuring coherence in supporting the Government of Zimbabwe in the development and implementation of the NDS 1.
- It is through this partnership, and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) that this workshop has come to fruition as part of our ongoing collaboration to support the implementation of the NDS 1.
- On that note, I wish to thank DESA, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) colleagues and our partners for this important collaboration in supporting the Government of Zimbabwe in its desire and journey to accelerate progress towards achievement of Agenda 2030, SDGs and the country's Vision 2030.
- Through our ongoing collaboration we have provided technical and financial support towards the development of the NDS1, including the rapid update of the Joint Needs Assessment sector notes to contribute towards baseline data for the National Development Strategy. The updated sector notes also put forward proposals for critical sector outcomes, as well as possible priority reforms and interventions required to achieve the national and sectoral development outcomes.

- All in all, a total of 19 updated sector notes – across a range of areas including economic, social sectors, infrastructure, environment and governance - were submitted to the Government, thanks to over 90 sector specialists across the UN, WB and AfDB who participated in the exercise.
- We also provided financial and technical support towards Thematic Working Group (TWG) consultations, including remote working and virtual connectivity capabilities (through provision of laptops, data and training) to broaden stakeholder participation in the context of COVID-19 limitations.
- Our specialists across the UN, AfDB and WB participated in these consultative workshops and provided inputs towards development and review of the National Development Strategy Results Frameworks as well as elaboration of interventions, programmes and projects.
- We are also providing support towards strengthening Monitoring & Evaluation capacity, refining the results framework mainly focussing on improving results language, quality of indicators, baselines and targets and ensuring horizontal and vertical consistency of the results framework.
- Through the implementation of the recently signed Zimbabwe United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022 - 2026), the United Nations looks to continue supporting the Government of Zimbabwe in the implementation of the National Development Strategy and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
- Informed by the United Nations Common Country Analysis and the National Development Strategy, and taking into account comparative advantage of the UN, the Cooperation Framework is anchored on key 4 strategic priority areas (or pillars) including:

1. People-centered, equitable, human development and well-being
  2. Environmental protection, climate resilience and natural resource management
  3. Economic transformation, equitable and inclusive growth
  4. Transformative, accountable, equitable and inclusive governance
- These strategic pillars of the cooperation Framework are closely aligned with the national priorities as outlined in the National Development Strategy.
  - If I may, in brief highlight the foundations on which the Cooperation Framework is anchored.
  - First, and perhaps most obviously, it articulates the UN's support to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic to 'build forward better' ensuring more resilient institutions and systems that are better prepared to anticipate and respond to shocks.
  - Second, it is firmly rooted in the principle of 'leave no one behind' and to 'reach the furthest behind first', which is the central promise of the 2030 Agenda and represents the commitment of the UN to address the multidimensional causes of poverty, inequalities and discrimination, and reduce vulnerabilities of the most marginalized in society.
  - Furthermore, the Cooperation Framework adopts a human rights-based approach while emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment, accountability and sustainability as the bedrock of sustainable development and human advancement.
  - Already, our joint teams from the Government and the United Nations have started designing implementation plans that elaborates how the Cooperation Framework supports National Development Strategy.

- All this work is not will not be possible without the existing collaborative and cordial working relations and I therefore wish to commend the Government for the continued productive partnership.
- Lastly, I wish to thank you all for committing time on this important exercise and I wish you fruitful deliberations. I hope these deliberations will feed into tangible policy actions for strengthening the integration of SDGs in the implementation of the National Development Strategy.
- I thank you