



Zimbabwe

**ADRESS BY THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC WORKS ON THE CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
FOR PILOT LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT HOLIDAY INN IN
HARARE ON 28 MARCH 2022**

UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Edward Kallon,

Inter-Regional Adviser, National Strategies and Capacity Building
Branch, DSDG/DESA, Ms. Carol Pollack,

Director of Gender, Poverty and Social, UNECA, Ms. Edlam Abera
Yemeru,

Senior Government Officials here present

Mayors and Chairpersons here present,

Councillors here present,

Town Clerks and Chief Executive Officers here present

Council Officials here present

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honour and privilege that I get to address you today at a momentous occasion for a capacity building workshop which is a major milestone to implement Voluntary Local Reviews in Zimbabwe to other local authorities in Zimbabwe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is pleasing to note that the thrust to move from Voluntary National Reporting started to take force here in Zimbabwe at the 6th Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in Victoria Falls in 2020. At this event, Harare and Victoria Falls City Councils presented their reports. It is against this background that I am pleased to see the process going further.

To our esteemed partners who have supported this event, I wish to inform you that this process is complementing a Cabinet Decision to cascade reporting on implementation of Sustainable Development Goals to all local authorities in line with Africa's Agenda 2030 and the National Development Strategy 1. Therefore, I wish to underscore that as Zimbabwe this capacity building workshop is just a starting point and lessons to be derived from this workshop will be used by my Ministry to take the process further.

In terms of progress on localisation of Sustainable Development Goals, we have come to a point of realization that the process requires local authorities to fully embrace Information Communication Technologies in their operations. In the past, most Councils were operating manually and not fully implementing ICT packages. Government has moved a step further to bridge the gap through the Local Authorities Digital System.

This is a local solution that seeks to plug the gaps in levels of ICT implementation in local authorities and the package is less costly in terms of foreign currency requirements that were needed for other packages. Processes were currently done to streamline the modules so that they apply to our local authorities. Building a solid base on ICT is critical for successful reporting on implementation of Sustainable Development Goals as accurate data will be recorded.

On a related note, Councils in Zimbabwe have not been able to do ward profiling to fully determine their asset bases. Moreover, their Valuation roles were not fully updated. The Ministry partook in process of capacity building in this area so that revenue bases for Councils are established and collection thereof is done in accordance with the law.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am fully aware that implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and service delivery at large has been affected by the coming of Covid-19 which grappled the whole world and Africa has not been spared. Further to the pandemic, Climate change has exposed the country and the cities to natural disasters with adverse effects on impacts on housing, health, water and sanitation. As Zimbabwe, “Building Forward Better” is being fully embraced in our response strategies and this should also be seen to be happening with all local authorities in the country.

I am also elated to note that, in this capacity building workshop peer learning has been incorporated as guests from other regional countries have been invited to make presentations, share experiences and challenges being faced in Voluntary Local Reporting. I believe this is a crucial step in consolidating Africa’s voice and key messages that came out of the Rwanda Declaration at the just ended 8th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development Goals held in Kigali during the period 1-5 March 2022.

Esteemed colleagues, it my belief that the following are some of the scalable solutions that are relevant to the local government sector to fully accelerate Voluntary Local Reporting

- i. The Voluntary Local Reporting Guidelines prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) require a separate engagement to fully unpack to all local authorities.
- ii. Gender Equality is also fundamental to achieving the SDGs but the Covid-19 crisis has had a determined effect on progress. The recovery must be leveraged to support women’s leadership and put women at the centre of the economy.

- iii. Digital connectivity is the thread that ties all the SDGs together and offer huge potential for sustainable and inclusive growth and a new era in education. With the appropriate financial conditions and know how, it is still possible to massively expand access for to the internet between now and 2030.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks I wish you all fruitful engagements and declare this capacity building workshop officially opened.