



## CONCEPT NOTE

### **National Launch Workshop for the project “Strengthening National Capacities for Enhancing Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (MSME) Resilience and Building Forward Better to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Zimbabwe”**

Organized by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of UN-DESA in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development (MWACSMED), Zimbabwe

8-10 June 2022, Harare, Zimbabwe

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are dynamic engines of economic growth, innovation and employment creation, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. MSMEs account for 90 percent of business enterprises and two-thirds of employment worldwide. They also account for between 80 to 90 percent of employment in low-income countries. Hence, they contribute a significant share to national income (GDP). In emerging economies, formal MSMEs contribute as much as 40 percent to national income and create 7 out of 10 jobs. In Zimbabwe, the sector accounts for more than 76 percent of all employment. The World Bank estimates that 600 million jobs will be needed by 2030 to absorb the growing global workforce, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The potential for the MSME sector to drive inclusive, sustained and equitable economic growth and employment could be enhanced if MSMEs were made more resilient to shocks and are able to access productive financing and quality infrastructure services.

Hence, MSME constitute an important source of income and livelihood for the working poor, women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations. Despite their importance, MSMEs must contend with multiple challenges during their daily operations, including limited access to mainstream finance, including bank loans at affordable rates; a lack of capacity and knowledge, particularly regarding business development, and insufficient marketing and strategic management skills; and market opportunities of high value, in addition to prevalent informality that further constraints their access to social protection mechanisms. For instance, a report analyzing over 400 MSMEs across East Africa found that around half have not achieved break-even.<sup>1</sup> Such challenges have undermined the resilience of MSMEs to external shocks and uncertainties such as those brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to global supply

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.intellecap.com/>

---

chains. In addition, MSMEs in developing countries frequently face significant climate and natural disaster risks, highlighting the need for national policies, strategies and interventions that enhance their resilience to exogenous shocks and risks.

Strengthening MSME resilience is urgent and crucial to protect jobs and livelihoods, particularly for women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations whose livelihoods heavily depend on the MSME sector. It is vital for building forward better and keeping the momentum on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development amid economic shocks and uncertainties.

The lack of enabling policy environment conducive for MSME growth and formalization, combined with infrastructure deficits and capacity and skill constraints among policymakers and MSME entrepreneurs are often recognized as underlying issues undermining MSME resilience. Their effects have been explicitly expressed during the COVID-19 pandemic, giving rise to the collapse of MSMEs and the loss of employment.

To address the myriad challenges facing MSMEs and to help them realize their full potentials, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development (MWACSMED), the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSDG/DESA), and the Resident Coordinator/UN Country Team are working together to provide demand-driven support to strengthen national capacities and enhance MSME resilience for building forward better to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Zimbabwe. In addition to building a coherent national policy environment conducive for the formalization, growth and resilience of MSMEs the Government of Zimbabwe and its development partners will strengthen capacities and skills of MSME entrepreneurs particularly in the ICT area, to fully harness access to market opportunities emerging from e-commerce and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) process.

Further, the Zimbabwe United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 supports the implementation of Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 objective: "Towards a prosperous and empowered upper-middle-income society by 2030," which represents the overarching framework to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the AU Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want.

To enhance MSME resilience, the UN-DESA funded project that will be launched at this national workshop will directly address these issues from the perspectives of both policymakers and MSME entrepreneurs, including MSMEs led by women and youth. Lack of policy, combined with the resultant high transaction costs, is frequently identified as the main barrier to access resources and support that would enhance MSME resilience in the face of exogenous shocks. In this vein, the project will strengthen capacities of policymakers to design and implement coherent policy measures contributing to the enabling policy environment conducive for MSME resilience. An enabling environment includes evidence-based policymaking processes tailor-made to MSME needs, demands, and the challenges they face, combined with simplified and transparent mechanisms leveraging MSME access to business development services, financial resources, high-value market opportunities as well management and technical innovations.

From the MSME entrepreneur perspective, the project will strengthen capacities of MSME entrepreneurs and address their capacity and skill constraints that undermine MSME resilience and constrain MSME growth and formalization.

---

## **2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of this workshop is to officially launch DESA's MSME projects together with the Government of Zimbabwe, MSME entrepreneurs, the UN Country Team and relevant stakeholder groups in Zimbabwe. It will identify and facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt on enhancing MSME resilience for building back better and map potential gaps and opportunities for enhancing MSME resilience and their contributions to accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU Agenda 2063 and national development priorities in Zimbabwe. Key messages from the workshop will inform the planning and implementation of the MSME project in Zimbabwe.

Through intensive knowledge exchange, the workshop will:

- Identify, document and exchange experiences, and lessons learned on enhancing MSME resilience in Zimbabwe, including relevant policy frameworks and operational mechanisms;
- Facilitate strategic discussions on potential contributions and roles and responsibilities of different stakeholder groups for elevating MSME resilience and building forward better in Zimbabwe;
- Develop recommendations informing planning and implementation of the UN-DESA MSME project that seeks to enhance MSME resilience to external shocks, ensuring that this critical sector contributes to achieving SDGs and building back better in Zimbabwe

Discussions will focus on the following questions (non-exhaustive):

- What are the demands, gaps and opportunities for elevating MSME resilience in Zimbabwe?
- What are potential contributions of different stakeholder groups towards elevating MSME resilience for building back better in Zimbabwe? What are existing good practices and effective actions that have achieved demonstrable impacts on elevating MSME resilience and their contributions to SDGs?
- How can different stakeholder groups, including policymakers, MSME entrepreneurs, MSME umbrella organizations, the UN system, development partners and researchers work together to ensure that local MSMEs become more resilient to external shocks and further the implementation of this project?

## **3. PARTICIPANTS**

The participants will include senior policymakers, national and local government officials, MSME entrepreneurs, representatives from the private sector, experts from the United Nations system, development partners, representatives from the private sector, civil society, national chambre of commerce and the academic community.

## **4. Workshop date and venue**

The capacity building workshop will be held on 6 – 8 June 2022 at Meikles hotel, Harare.

---

## 5. Information

For more information, please contact the following officers.

### Contacts

Mr. Clark Ke LIU

Sustainable Development Officer

DESA/DSDG/NSCBB

Email: [ke.liu@un.org](mailto:ke.liu@un.org)

Mr. Billiat chaderopa

Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development (MWACSMED)

Email: [billiechades@gmail.com](mailto:billiechades@gmail.com)

## 6. DRAFT PROGRAMME

The final programme will be disseminated to participants ahead of the capacity building workshop.

DAY ONE	
9:00 – 9:30	<b>Arrival and registration</b>
9:30 – 10:00	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mr. Edward Kallon</b>, UN Resident Coordinator, Zimbabwe</li><li>• <b>Mr. Amson Sibanda</b>, Chief National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</li><li>• <b>Mr. Moses Mhike</b>, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development (MWACSMED) (TBC)</li></ul>
10:00 – 10:20	<b>Group Photo/Coffee Break</b>
10:20 – 13:00	<b>Session I: COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on MSMEs and MSME Supporting Policies in Zimbabwe</b> <p>Focusing on women and youth-led MSMEs, this session will explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on MSMEs in Zimbabwe. It will bring onboard senior policymakers from government departments and policy think tanks to review economic stimulus policies and MSME supporting programmes released by the Government of Zimbabwe during the Covid-19 pandemic, and explore opportunities and mechanisms that would strengthen coherent policy frameworks for elevating MSME resilience and their contributions to Sustainable</p>

	<p>Development Goals (SDGs). The session will facilitate strategic discussions on policy measures that would incentivize MSMEs resilience and expand their contributions to decent jobs, poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood for women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations in the inclusive and sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Panel Presentations  <u>Proposed Panel List</u>  <i>MWACSMED</i>  <i>MPSLSW</i>  <i>MEF</i>  <i>MIC</i>  <i>Reserve Bank</i></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session</b></p>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00 – 16:30 (Coffee Break at 15:00-15:15)	<p><b>Focus Group Discussion I</b> (Methods of group formulation to be further discussed)</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (non-exhaustive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are challenges and demands of Zimbabwean MSMEs are facing during the emergency response and recovery from the pandemic?</li> <li>• To what extent have MSME supporting policies effectively benefited MSMEs during the pandemic?</li> <li>• If not, what are the constraints? And where are areas of improvement to strengthen the effectiveness of MSME supporting policies?</li> </ul>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><b>Rapporteur presentation on key messages discussed</b></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session</b></p>
<b>DAY TWO</b>	
9:00 – 9:30	<b>Recap of Key Messages from Day One</b>
9:30 – 13:00 (Coffee Break at 11:00–11:15)	<p><b>Session II Experience, good practices and lessons learnt of supporting MSME resilience in Zimbabwe</b></p> <p>This session will identify, document and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices of supporting MSME resilience in Zimbabwe. It will bring onboard both policymakers and MSME entrepreneurs. The session will highlight policy good practices launched by national and local government departments, which contribute to MSME resilience to uncertainties. Moreover, it will identify self-initiated mechanisms by MSME entrepreneurs to cope with economic shocks brought forth by the Covid-19 pandemic. Challenges and demands of MSMEs for resilience will be further discussed. The session will eventually extract key messages that would inform policies to elevate MSME resilience amid economic shocks and uncertainties.</p> <p>Panel Presentations  <u>Proposed Panel List</u></p>

	<p><i>MWACSMED provincial officials</i>  <i>MSME Umbrella organization (Women and Youth MSME Associations, Chamber of MSMEs and Informal Economy Association)</i>  <i>MSME entrepreneurs</i></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session</b></p>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00-16:30 (Coffee Break at 15:00-15:15)	<p><b>Focus Group Discussion II</b> (Methods of group formulation to be further discussed)</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (non-exhaustive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are good practices MSMEs have initiated to cope with uncertainties derived from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic?</li> <li>• What are opportunities to leverage replication of their good practices?</li> <li>• What are gaps and challenges hindering MSME resilience before, during and after the pandemic?</li> <li>• How policy support by both national and local government departments could optimize MSME resilience in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic?</li> </ul>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><b>Rapporteur presentation on key messages discussed</b></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session</b></p>
<b>DAY THREE</b>	
9:00 – 9:30	<b>Recap of Key Messages from Day Two</b>
9:30 – 13:00 (Coffee Break at 11:00–11:15)	<p><b>Session III MSME resilience for inclusive and sustainable recovery in Zimbabwe</b></p> <p>MSMEs provide critical livelihood resources for the poor, women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations. This session will explore how MSME resilience will contribute to inclusive and sustainable recovery by providing decent job opportunities to the poor and groups in vulnerable situations during the recovery from the pandemic. It will also explore how MSMEs will support sustainable recovery by contributing to sustainable consumptions, innovation and resource efficiency. This session will include the presentation of speakers from international organizations on the good practices of elevating MSME resilience for inclusive and sustainable recovery.</p> <p>Panel Presentations</p> <p><u><i>Proposed Panel List</i></u>  <i>DESA</i>  <i>ILO</i>  <i>UNDP</i>  <i>World Bank</i>  <i>African Development Bank</i></p>

	<b>Question and Answer Session</b>
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00-16:00 (Coffee Break at 15:00-15:15)	<p><b>Focus Group Discussion III</b> (Methods of group formulation to be further discussed)</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (non-exhaustive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are good practices of international organizations in supporting MSME resilience?</li> <li>• What are gaps, challenges and priorities to enhance the effectiveness of international organizations' support?</li> <li>• How DESA's MSME projects will provide added value and synergize with existing MSME supporting policies and programmes in Zimbabwe?</li> </ul>
16:00-16:30	<p><b>Rapporteur presentation on key messages discussed</b></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session</b></p>
16:30-17:00	<p><b>Closing Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</li> <li>• MWACSMED Representative</li> </ul>