



**Statement by Edward Kallon,
Resident Coordinator, United Nations in Zimbabwe**

On the occasion of the launch of the project: Strengthening National Capacities for Enhancing Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Resilience and Building Forward Better to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Zimbabwe at Monomotapa Hotel, Harare

Wednesday 8 June 2022 @0930-1000am

Salutations

- Mrs Vaida Mashangwa, Director, standing in for: Mr. Moses Mhike, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development (MWACSMED)
- Senior Government Officials
- Members of the UN family: UN DESA, UNDP, UNIDO, ILO
- Esteemed delegates and presenters
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

I am pleased to join you today at the national launch of the project “Strengthening National Capacities for Enhancing Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Resilience and Building Forward Better to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Zimbabwe”.

MSMEs are dynamic engines of economic growth, innovation and employment creation. According to the data provided by the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), formal and informal MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, on average, for 70% of total employment and 50% of GDP worldwide. In Zimbabwe, the MSME sector accounts for more than 76 percent of all employment. Hence, MSMEs contribute a significant share to national incomes and is an important source of income and livelihoods for the working poor, women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations. Despite small in business scale, collectively, MSMEs comprise the economic backbones of our communities.

Most importantly, MSMEs contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). MSMEs help reduce levels of poverty through job creation and economic growth, they are key drivers of employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship for women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations. MSMEs are the majority of the world's food producers and play critical roles in closing the gender gap as they support women's full and effective participation in the economy and in society.

However, despite their significant contributions to SDGs, in the past two years beyond the negative impact of the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, MSMEs, especially those owned by women and youth, have been significantly affected by a myriad of challenges. These challenges include, the ongoing climate crisis, conflicts, economic shocks and uncertainties. Consequently, we are seeing

high levels of extreme poverty and this is disproportionately affecting the poor and groups in vulnerable situations. This is a major drawback to the Leave No One Behind commitment which forms the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Given the importance of MSMEs in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, the United Nations Secretary General in his Report on Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID 19, calls for sustainable solutions to cope with the impacts of COVID 19. In his report the SG's calls for scaling up our focus on people – women, youth, low-wage workers, small and medium enterprises, the informal sector and on vulnerable groups. The SG emphasizes the urgent need to support enterprises , particularly MSMEs

For this reason, strengthening MSMEs resilience in Zimbabwe is urgent and crucial to protecting 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.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the UN, we believe in strong and collaborative partnerships to keep the momentum on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development especially targeting those often left behind and hardest hit by a myriad of challenges. It is against this background that the UN in Zimbabwe and the Government of Zimbabwe developed and signed the 2022-2026 Zimbabwe United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework which has four priority areas: People, Planet, Prosperity and Peace. All these pillar are interlinked and dependent on each other. The Cooperation Framework Prosperity pillar is aligned to the 'Prosperity' Pillar of the 2030 Agenda and AU Agenda 2063 while strengthening the NDS1 aspirations for economic growth and stability and increasing resilience to macroeconomic shocks and stresses.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Strengthening resilience to shocks and accelerating enterprise development through value chain development and MSMEs support is among other key priorities of the UN in Zimbabwe. I am glad to note that the UN Country Team is already implementing interventions in partnership with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in strengthening resilience and promoting enterprise development. This support as articulated in the Cooperation Framework include: capacity building, along with policy, strategy and frameworks formulation and implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We remain committed to continue working with the Government of Zimbabwe to strengthen national capacities for enhancing MSMEs resilience and building forward better to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. I am glad to note that Zimbabwe is among the 9 targeted countries (Cambodia, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Madagascar, Kenya, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Zimbabwe) benefitting from the Project on strengthening national capacities for enhancing MSMEs resilience and building forward better to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This initiative is being supported by the UN Peace and Development Fund (PDF) and the UN Development Account with UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs being the lead implementing entity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and fully understand the progress on the SDGs and the impact of our interventions and policies on the poorest and marginalised groups, Member States should have robust monitoring and evaluation systems and frameworks. Development and implementation of robust M & E frameworks is one of the priorities of the project we are gathered to launch today.

I am glad to note that UN DESA has already supported the Ministry of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in formulating the MSME monitoring framework. The monitoring framework is of high priority for the Government of Zimbabwe and it is a crucial policy toolkit that provides real-time information for

evidenced based policymaking process and expands MSME contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the National Development Strategy.

Together as the UN we are committed to continuously strengthen the capacities of policymakers and MSMEs entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe, coordinating constructive dialogue and forging inclusive partnerships to unlock the full strength of MSMEs for building forward better and stronger with shared prosperity and opportunities for all.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the organizers of this workshop, and I hope you will have productive discussions that will contribute to the MSMEs sector which is critical to inclusive and sustainable recovery in Zimbabwe.

Thank you!