Closing Remarks

National Capacity Building Workshop for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) on Entrepreneurship and Business Management

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Representatives of the MSME sector in Zimbabwe

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today at the national capacity building workshop on “Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) on Entrepreneurship and Business Management.”

First, I would like to start by thanking the presence of the Permanent Secretary and senior officials from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development. Your presence demonstrates the high-level commitment to promoting the contributions of MSMEs to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe as well as Zimbabwe’s aspirations to be a middle-income country by 2030 as outlined in the NDS-1.

Second, I also like to congratulate participating MSME entrepreneurs and policymakers in this workshop for your active engagement and insightful discussions over the past three days. As a result of the commitment you have shown to enhancing your skills and knowledge, I believe you are now better equipped with the latest knowledge and entrepreneurial skills that will support the resilience of your businesses, especially when Zimbabwe and the rest of the world is grappling with the cost-of-living crisis that was triggered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, the energy crunch, and rising inflation. All these factors have impacted your ability to run your businesses efficiently as they have reduced the number of customers and disrupted your supply chains.
The reason why PS Mhike, his team and my colleague Clark decided to come and be with you this week is because both the Government of Zimbabwe and the United Nations believe in what you do. The enterprises that you run are critical engines for accelerating the implementation of NDS-1 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially those goals related to employment creation, the eradication of poverty and hunger, the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and reductions in inequality.

You are all witnesses to the power of MSMEs as job creators and incubators for entrepreneurship and innovations in the various communities you live and run your businesses. It is therefore important that the Government of Zimbabwe and its development partners that include the United Nations system have joined hands and are actively supporting MSMEs. This support will not only strengthen your businesses but will ensure that MSMEs contribute to inclusive growth and expand shared prosperity in Zimbabwe and the rest of the world.

PS Mhike, please allow me to also recall the successful policy workshop that was jointly organized with your Ministry in Harare in June 2022. At that workshop, we launched two UNDESA funded projects in Zimbabwe, first the project on “Strengthening national capacities for enhancing MSME resilience and building forward better to accelerate the 2030 Agenda in developing countries” funded by the United Nations Peace and Development Fund, and second, the project on “Strengthened resilience of MSMEs in Africa and Asia” funded by the United Nations Development Account.

During that workshop, your ministry and UNDESA successfully facilitated an inclusive stakeholder dialogue between policymakers, MSME entrepreneurs, the UN Country Team, the World Bank and other stakeholders. We were able to identify key priorities that the two projects will focus on.

One of those priorities - strengthening business management capacities and entrepreneurship skills among MSMEs – is the focus of the capacity building activities that you are all participating in this week. This workshop therefore comprises a concrete follow up to the recommendations from the policy workshop we organized in Harare last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the journey for building forward better from the Covid-19 pandemic requires not only sustained policy support. It also calls for concrete measures that strengthen
business management capacities and entrepreneurial skills among MSMEs. I am therefore glad you all took time from your families, businesses, and office to spend some time with Ms. Busi Bango and her team. I am sure you she did a fantastic job to impact cutting-edge knowledge and skills that will help you run your enterprises better and, in the process, increase your productivity, sales and the quality of goods and services that you offer.

Although the workshop is drawing to an end, I believe the learning journey will not stop here. Ms. Bango and Ministry will be checking on you to see how you are doing and to offer support.

We also expect each one of you to share the knowledge and skills you have gained this week with other entrepreneurs in your communities. You all constitute the building blocks for enhancing MSME resilience and enhancing their contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Vision 2030: Towards a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We at DESA look forward to continuing the successful cooperation with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development and our partner Empretec Zimbabwe. Without their dedication and hard work, this workshop will not be possible.

Together with the RCO and UN Country Team, we look forward to continue supporting the Government of Zimbabwe and MSMEs through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2022-2026.

I thank you for your attention.

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