



Government of Zimbabwe

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE,
LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

AT THE

**SOUTHERN AFRICA TRI-NATIONAL SDGS LOCALIZATION
AND VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP**

Salutations

Honorable Ministers

Government Officials from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa

Local Authority Officials from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa,

Distinguished Representatives from UNDESA, UNRCO, UNDP, and other partners,

Civil Society Organisations representatives

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Honored guests, distinguished delegates, and esteemed colleagues from Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, as well as our partners from UNDESA, UNRCO, and UNDP.

It is my great honor to welcome you to the Southern Africa SDGs Localization and Voluntary Local Reviews Capacity Building Workshop, here in the majestic and beautiful town of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. This gathering, with participants from Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, alongside key regional and international stakeholders, marks a significant milestone in our shared journey towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This workshop is not only a reflection of our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also a critical platform for strengthening our collective ability to implement them at the local level. The SDGs are global objectives, but their true impact can only be realized when localized and integrated within our communities. Local governments play a vital role in translating global frameworks into

actionable, context-specific policies and projects that improve the lives of citizens. The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process serves as an essential tool in this endeavor, enabling local authorities to assess their progress, align efforts with national priorities, and contribute meaningfully to the global agenda.

This workshop comes at a time when we face multiple challenges—economic crises, the impacts of climate change, and rising inequalities—that threaten to derail our progress. However, these challenges underscore the importance of collaboration, coordination, and innovative solutions at all levels of government. Our three countries share common concerns, particularly with regard to climate-related disasters, and this workshop offers an invaluable opportunity to exchange experiences, learn from each other's successes and challenges, and strengthen the linkages between national and local government efforts to achieve the SDGs.

One of the key goals of this workshop is to enhance the capacity of local and national governments, as well as key stakeholders in Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, in preparing comprehensive and action-oriented VLRs. These reviews will ensure that the SDGs are not just theoretical concepts but active, measurable, and contextually relevant policies at the local level. As we share experiences, we will identify best practices, reinforce the alignment between local and national frameworks, and build stronger partnerships for sustainable development.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Italy for their generous support, which has made this initiative possible. Their continued commitment to funding projects that advance sustainable development, particularly in Africa, is deeply appreciated. I also extend my thanks to UNDESA, UNRCO, and UNDP for their invaluable partnership. Your expertise and resources are

essential in helping our local governments effectively engage with and implement the SDGs.

In Zimbabwe, we are deeply committed to ensuring that the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063 are fully integrated into our National Development Strategy 2. This integration is critical for effective monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, not only at the global and continental levels but also at the local level. Through this alignment, we aim to ensure that no one and no place is left behind in our pursuit of sustainable development.

As part of our efforts, Zimbabwe has worked to capacitate all 92 local authorities on the Voluntary Local Review Process in line with the Cabinet Directive of 2020. We are expecting the remaining 84 local authorities to produce their first VLRs by the end of this month. This is a significant step in our localizing efforts and demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all local governments are engaged and prepared to contribute to SDG implementation.

The theme of SDG localization cannot be overstated. Local governments are at the forefront of addressing the challenges the SDGs seek to resolve—poverty, gender inequality, climate resilience, quality education, and much more. It is imperative that we work together to develop strategies that accelerate SDG implementation and ensure that policies, investments, and actions reflect the needs of our communities. Furthermore, we must continue to promote inclusive governance and ensure that the voices of all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, are heard and acted upon.

This workshop offers an important opportunity for all participants to engage in deep discussions, share insights, and collaborate on innovative, home-grown solutions for enhancing the Voluntary Local Review process. By doing so, we can empower our local governments

to take ownership of the SDGs and ensure that we make meaningful progress toward sustainable and inclusive development.

At the heart of this workshop is a desire to build deeper cooperation among our governments. The discussions and recommendations that emerge will provide a foundation for strengthening partnerships at the local, national, and international levels, ensuring that no one is left behind in our journey towards sustainable development.

In Zimbabwe, we are committed to strengthening these partnerships, and through this workshop, we aim to further align our efforts with the global SDG agenda and African Union priorities. We will continue working to mainstream the SDGs and African Union Agenda 2063 into our national strategies, ensuring that they are effectively tracked and reported at all levels.

Once again, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all partners and stakeholders for their support and partnership. Your commitment to empowering local governments is indispensable in our efforts to localize the SDGs. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to all participants who have traveled to be here today. Your dedication and hard work are essential to ensuring that our communities thrive and that we continue to make meaningful progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

As we embark on this workshop, I encourage all of you to actively engage, share your insights, and collaborate on the best ways to advance the Voluntary Local Review process. Together, we can enhance local governance, drive sustainable development, and ensure a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and inspiring workshop.