



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

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# PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL PROGRESS ON ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION





# OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

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- **Introduction (Status and Causes of Poverty and Inequality)**
- **Background**
- **National Policy Measures and Related Approaches**
- **Conclusion**

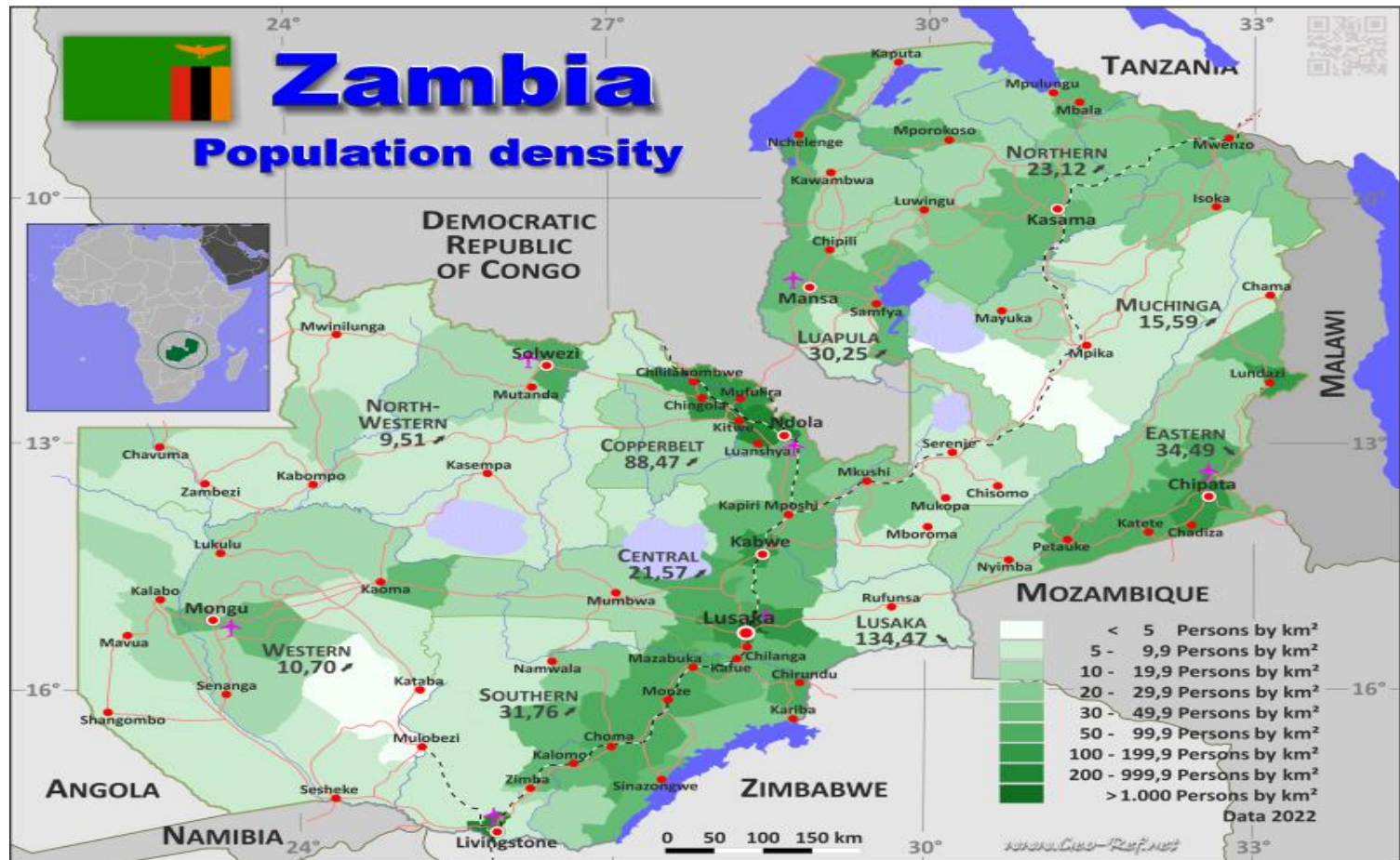


# Introduction

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Zambia, like many countries in the Global South, is navigating the compounded effects of a triple crisis fuel price volatility, food insecurity, financing and climate change.

These crises have exposed the structural weaknesses in the national economy and social systems, particularly their impact on the most vulnerable: the rural poor, informal workers, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities resulting in high poverty rate and inequalities.





# Introduction

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- Zambia has a population of about 19.6 million (2022, LCMS)
- Poverty is estimated at 60 percent.
- Rural-urban estimates show that the rural population is poor at 78.8 percent, as per the 2022 national survey
- Poverty in Zambia remains more pronounced in rural than in urban areas.
- Children at 53% of the population with youth at 34%
- Inequality along gender lines is high, with the Gender Inequality Index (GII) value at 0.540 in 2018

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# Introduction

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- Limited Access to Quality Education and Skills Training perpetuates intergenerational poverty and underemployment.
- Informal Employment and Economic Insecurity over 80% of Zambia's labor force is informal, with limited protection from shocks.
- Inadequate Infrastructure and Public Services rural areas face underinvestment, limiting resilience.



# Introduction

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- Further, most of the rural populations rely on subsistence agriculture (52.3%), have limited access to markets and other resources that would enhance their productivity
- As such this compromises their capacity to be resilient in the wake of disasters such as droughts, floods or periods of price fluctuations.



# Background

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- The Government of the Republic of Zambia recognizes Social Protection as a key strategy in the overall development of the country in addressing poverty, vulnerability, and inequalities as contained in the 8NDP.
- Progress has been made in harmonizing and strengthening social protection delivery systems at all levels to address the multiple causes of poverty and vulnerability and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.





# Background

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- However, this progress is increasingly threatened by overlapping crises, which strain the country's ability to sustain and scale up social protection interventions.
- Unless social protection systems are further strengthened to become more adaptive, shock-responsive, and sustainable, these risks will reverse the development gains made.



# Background

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- In recognition of this, Zambia has enhanced efforts to make social protection more adaptive.
- This entails shifting from traditional safety nets to more resilient, shock-responsive systems.



# Overview of Social Protection

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Based on 4 Pillars

- Social Assistance
- Livelihood and Empowerment
- Protection
- Social Security

With disability, Gender and Climate Change as cross-cutting

Significant progress has been made in some social protection programmes, such as the Social Cash Transfer programme about 900,000 in 2022 to about 1.3 million beneficiary households in 2024 (6.5 million individuals) & expected to raise to 1.5million by the end of 2026

*(Covers 30% of the population and at least 50% of the poor at 4.8 average household size).*



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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1. Zambia launched a **National Adaptation Plan (NAP)** and rolled out a green growth strategy in 2024.

This links green economy goals (renewables, sustainable agriculture) with social cohesion and climate security.



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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2. The country has adopted the **2025 National Social Protection Policy**, focused on life-cycle framing of social protection.

# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

This focuses on various vulnerabilities across the lifecycle with disability and gender as cross-cutting



## HUMAN LIFECYCLE and Associated Risks

### 1. Maternity and Early Childhood

Maternal and Infant Mortality and Morbidity  
Lack of Healthcare  
Malnutrition/Undernutrition  
Single Parenting  
Orphanhood

### 2. Childhood and Adolescence

Malnutrition/Undernutrition  
Primary Education: Low Attendance/Poor Learning  
Secondary Education: Lack of Access  
Special/Inclusive Educative Needs  
Child Labour  
Orphanhood

### 3. Youth

Lack of Skills and Training  
Lack of Access to Tertiary Education  
Lack of Access to Employment  
Unemployment/Underemployment

### 4. Adulthood

Unemployment/Underemployment  
Low Productivity  
Lack of Capital  
Burden of Care

### 5. Old Age

Lack of Healthcare  
Lack of Mobility  
Widowhood  
Burden of Care



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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The lifecycle approach in this way is transforming social protection from a reactive safety net into a proactive system that protects individuals throughout their lives, even amid systemic shocks like rising fuel prices, food insecurity, and climate-related disasters.

By embedding this approach in Zambia's social protection framework, it is envisaged that the country will:

- Improve resilience and equity,
- Prevent long-term poverty traps, and
- Foster inclusive development.



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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## **3. Free Education Policy**

Zambia's free education policy has played a crucial role in strengthening adaptive social protection by addressing one of the most persistent drivers of poverty: limited access to education.

By removing school fees for primary and secondary education, the policy has significantly reduced financial pressure on poor households, especially in times of crisis.





# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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## **4. Cash Plus Approach to SP**

- While critical, traditional cash transfers are often insufficient on their own to break the cycle of poverty and build long-term resilience.
- In response, Zambia is enhancing the cash transfers by implementing the Cash Plus Model
- The strategy that goes beyond income support to address the multidimensional nature of poverty.



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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The Cash Plus Model enhances adaptive social protection by:

## **❖ Enabling Shock Responsiveness**

- Complementary services help families rebuild livelihoods

## **❖ Building Long-Term Resilience**

- Access to knowledge, assets, and diversified livelihoods

## **❖ Reducing Structural Vulnerabilities**

- Ensures that marginalized groups (women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons) are included in social and economic systems.



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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## 5. Social Registry

- The government recognizes that a functional social registry will allow fast expansion of programs (horizontal expansion) or increased benefits to the most affected (vertical expansion).
- Zambia has embarked on the development of a robust social registry to enhance targeting, equity, and responsiveness to real-time shocks



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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The crises of rising fuel prices, food insecurity, and escalating climate impacts have disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, particularly those in rural areas.

To this effect, comprehensive agriculture transformation programmes are being implemented alongside other policy instruments, mainly aimed at promoting crop diversification in light of climate change, farm block developments, mechanization services, technology adoption, irrigation schemes and harmonizing extension service delivery.

This aimed at enhancing food security in the country.



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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## **Wetland Farming and Alternative Livelihood Intervention under the Food Security Pack Program**

Wetland Farming and Alternative Livelihood Interventions emerged as key strategies for adaptive social protection, integrating resilience building with poverty reduction, food security, and environmental sustainability.



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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- By integrating environmental sustainability, economic resilience, and social inclusion, the program provides a holistic model for responding to the converging threats of fuel insecurity, food crises, and climate change.



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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Two prominent cash approaches have also been implemented in the framework of emergencies

1. The **Emergency Cash Transfer** and
2. The **Cash for Work** program.

These interventions were designed not only to provide immediate relief but also to build long-term resilience within communities.



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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- Play vital roles in adaptive social protection by addressing three key pillars:
- **Shock Responsiveness:** Ability to scale up and deliver timely support during emergencies.
- **Resilience Building:** Promotion of sustainable livelihoods and reduced long-term vulnerability.
- **Flexibility and Integration:** Linkages with broader development, disaster risk management, and climate adaptation strategies.





# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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- The Constituency Development Fund has expanded significantly in recent years and is now a decentralized tool that responds to local shocks, including rising fuel costs, transport challenges, energy, and poverty.
- This is through support to a wide range of groups (students, youth, women, SMEs) across sectors.
- It rides on local initiatives to address local challenges, making it more sustainable.



# National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....

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- Zambia has also put in place a comprehensive set of macroeconomic policies and infrastructure reforms to tackle its fuel crisis.
- These include market-based pricing, arrears clearance, storage expansion, and monetary/ fiscal tightening under an IMF-backed framework that sets a strong foundation for social spending.
- increased allocations towards social protection in the national budget. For example, between 2016 and 2025, social protection allocations as a share of the national budget have increased from 2.4 percent to 7.4 percent



# **National Policy Measures and related Approaches cont....**

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Zambia's labor market is dominated by the informal sector, which accounts for over 80% of total employment

There is a need to ensure access to formal social protection systems such as pensions, health insurance to ensure they are not exposed during periods of crisis.

The National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) has been gradually extending coverage to the informal economy.

This is to better prepare them to cope with and adapt to shocks such as economic downturns, health crises, or climate change.



# Challenges

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- **Coordination Complexity:** Requires strong coordination across multiple ministries
- **Capacity Gaps:** Limited local capacity to deliver and monitor multiple interventions simultaneously.
- **Data and Targeting:** Effective integration relies on accurate data systems and real-time vulnerability assessments.
- **Sustainable Financing:** Long-term success depends on predictable funding and donor-government alignment.



# Conclusion

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- There is need for more action backed by evidence to address the challenges we face.
- We therefore look forward to enhanced collaboration and implementation of the Project to strengthen the capacity of our social protection systems.



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION!**