



THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

2020 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT

16th July, 2020

Madam President of ECOSOC,
Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great honour that I submit this statement at the 2020 ECOSOC High Level Political Forum on behalf of The Government of the Republic of Zambia. I wish to state that Zambia presents its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to this High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Thursday 16th July 2020.

Since the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in 2016, the Government of Zambia has worked to ensure its integration into the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and commenced on the implementation of the programmes to deliver on SDGs and strategic objectives of the plan.

The Government decided to share progress and experience on implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable in 2018 through the Voluntary National Review. In accordance with the Whole-Society-Approach, an Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group was constituted in August 2019, with representatives from all Government line ministries, cooperating partners, the private sector and trade unions as well as representative civil society, faith-based organisations, academia and the youth. Focal Point Persons from these institutions were designated and tasked to provide the requisite information for the preparation of the VNR report.

The Zambia 2020 VNR has focused on all the Sustainable Development Goals except for goals no. 10, 12 and 14. Importantly to note is that although Goal 10 was not reported separately, several aspects of it were addressed in other goals in line with the National Integrated SDGs Indicator Framework.

Despite data challenges in preparing the VNR report that Zambia like many other developing countries have been faced with, the country was able to report on progress made in the four years of implementing SDGs. The assessment to identify areas where the country is performing favorably, and areas where extra attention will be required if the SDGs targets are to be achieved by 2030, was made. The assessment has also provided

adequate information to enable the country understand the challenges being faced in the implementation of SDGs, as well as consolidate the lessons learnt.

Excellencies,

One of the lessons learnt, is that unexpected circumstances, or exogenous factors may impact on the implementation of planned programmes and activities. In the face of the COVID 19 Pandemic, the changes in the prevailing and projected socio-economic circumstances are expected to negatively impact on the progress and the success of the national development plan. The implementation of the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) as well as the SDGs in Zambia has been notably impacted by three major shocks: Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19); low economic performance; and climate change, which have exacerbated the vulnerable situation that the country is already faced with as a least developed country and a land locked developing country.

This VNR has been conducted when the whole world is facing serious challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and Zambia has not spared. As of early June 2020, Zambia recorded 1,089 cases, seven COVID-19-related deaths and 912 recoveries. The pandemic has affected almost all aspects of life including the growth of the economy and the social outlook for all communities. The fiscal space for implementation of the 7NDP has been drastically reduced; both the public and private sector have been disrupted and resources reallocated from planned activities to COVID-19 related contingencies. With limited alternative sources, SDGs implementation will be negatively affected.

From an average growth rate of 6.9 percent between 2005 and 2014, the GDP growth rate slowed to an average of 3.7 percent during the 2015-2018 period. The implementation of the 7NDP and SDGs coincided with these worsening macroeconomic conditions, which were exacerbated by unstable exchange rate, declining commodity prices, declines in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). The low level of economic growth and attendant low revenue generation, in the midst of declining ODA and FDI will hamper the effective implementation of SDGs.

Excellency,

As a developing country, Zambia has not been spared from the adverse effects of climate change and remains highly vulnerable. The majority of the rural population in Zambia work in the informal agricultural sector and are the most affected by climate impacts due to their reliance on rain-fed agriculture. The droughts of 2018/2019 rain season impacted negatively on the agriculture sector as well as its enabling sectors such as the energy and water sectors.

What even poses more challenge is the fact that the frequency and intensity of climate events is expected to rise in future, with negative socio-economic impacts. It is estimated that, without action climate change will cost the country approximately 0.4 percent of annual economic growth. The key sectors that will be most affected include agriculture, manufacturing, mining, energy, and services. Climate change impacts affect the extent to which plans could be successful and call for adoption of adaptation mechanisms that lessen the adverse impacts.

In order to address this situation, Zambia will continue to promote sustainable initiatives such as renewable energy which has seen the country diversify its energy mix from 99 percent reliance on hydro power production in 2011 to 80.6 percent in 2019. Solar energy currently accounts for about 90MW (3 percent of the total energy). Climate smart agriculture, water harvesting techniques and green infrastructure, are part of the climate change adaptation interventions being promoted.

Zambia, however, is seeking strategic partnerships in accelerating its adaptation agenda. The country further remains open to meaningful collaboration in any other areas that may help speed-up the implementation of SDGs and other global development agendas.

I thank you.