

Transformation Towards Sustainable Resilient Communities: Exchange Of Experiences On City And Local Government Actions For Implementing Sustainable Development GOAL 11 (SDG 11): 16-18 May 2018, Lilongwe, Malawi.

PROTOCOL GREETINGS

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.

It is a great pleasure and honour to address you today as we share experiences on local government actions and initiatives aimed at implementing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 11) on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in fulfilment of Agenda 2030.

Allow me to give you a brief background of the City of Masvingo. We are the oldest urban settlement in Zimbabwe founded by the Pioneer Column in 1890 then called "Fort Victoria" and "Masvingo" upon attainment of independence in 1980.

The City of Masvingo is the Provincial Capital of Masvingo Province located in the southern part of the country with a population of 87,886 (2012 Census) now estimated at 105,000. Just 27km from the City Centre, is the Great Zimbabwe National Monument, a World Heritage Site and major tourist attraction.

My presentation will focus on key programmes that the City of Masvingo has implemented in pursuit of achieving SDG 11 despite increasing demands for efficient and effective municipal services against a background of dwindling resources and a poorly performing economy.

My City has prioritised provision of water and sanitation, environmental protection, provision of housing, repair and maintenance of road infrastructure and good governance as our top service delivery priorities.

The Future We Want document notes that "...meaningful involvement and active participation ...of stakeholders" is key if we are to move towards creating sustainable societies.

Our strategy has been very simple, all our programmes are driven by citizen participation through an ongoing consultative process. We believe that for any programme to succeed we must take everyone on board. We believe that solutions to problems should come from communities.

a) **HEALTHY CITY INITIATIVE** -

Our Healthy City Initiative, is driven by the City's Vision;- *"To be a prosperous, sustainable and environmentally friendly city by 2020"*.

In the above regard, in conjunction with Development Partners and the Environmental Regulatory Authority we have set up structures across the city in each ward called **Health Clubs** to spearhead our vision to become a clean and environmentally friendly city. Health Clubs are responsible for;

- Organizing Clean up Campaigns
- Waste recycling projects – Council donated piece of land from which the Health Clubs operate. Waste recycling is a source of income for the Clubs. Products such as Aluminum three legged pots, baskets, mats and plastic bricks are produced for sale.
- Dissemination of Health Information to the Communities.

Masvingo Health Clubs have become an icon in the Country and have disseminated their skills to other sister local authorities and trained other Clubs in aluminum pot making from recycled cans which is a source of income.

Residents now treat waste as money thus keeping the streets clean.

Challenges

Health Clubs have gone a long way in collecting and recycling plastic and paper waste, thus creating a clean environment. Council is seized with constructing a landfill for solid waste disposal. This is a project on high priority and requiring funding.

b) **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION- Sewer Levy**

The City of Masvingo has a unique geographical setup. The source of water, Lake Mtirikwi is located downstream hence any pollution upstream would result in contamination of the water source resulting in higher costs of water treatment.

Through a citizen engagement participatory process, Masvingo City Council consulted residents and other stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the environmental pollution arising from the discharge of raw sewer into water bodies during times of electricity power outages.

In 2013 a "*Sewer Levy*", a tax outside the annual budget tariffs structure was introduced to fund the construction of a dedicated power station to supply power to the Sewage Treatment Works. This would result in continuous supply of electricity hence uninterrupted treatment of sewage to meet effluent disposal requirements/regulations.

Residential households contributed a total of USD 3.00 per month for 6 months. A total of USD 408,260.00 was billed with industrial consumers contributing USD 45,168 (11%) and residential consumers (89%).

A total of USD 388,964.30 (95%) was collected from the Sewer Levy over a period of six months. The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) constructed the dedicated substation over a period of four months at a cost of USD 402,000. Council advanced the difference.

Council engaged development partners to assist in rehabilitating the Sewage Treatment Works.

Regular feedback meetings with residents were held to update them on the progress on works. Important information including expenditure at each stage was provided.

On completion of the rehabilitation of the Sewage Treatment Plant/Works (Biological Nutrient Removal Plant) and Conventional Plant and the dedicated power sub-station, a tour of the project was carried out with representatives from the business community, selected residents from all Wards and senior government officials.

Benefits

Following the above interventions, the City of Masvingo is now compliant with Effluent Disposal Regulations. The City is now classified Blue (cleanest category) initially from red category (worst pollution). The water course is no longer producing a pungent odour and water hyacinth is receding due to the effective waste treatment process which reduces supply of nutrients from raw sewage on which hyacinth thrives.

c) ROADS MAINTENANCE- Roads Levy

The National Road Condition Survey revealed that the City has a total road network of 257 kilometres. Of that network, only 4 kilometres were found to be in a good condition with 153 kilometres in a fair condition and the rest in a poor condition.

Residents were consulted on the best way forward to repair roads in residential areas cognisant of the financial challenges facing central government to avail funds for road maintenance and the City's small maintenance budget.

In 2015 residents of Masvingo resolved that Council should introduce a "Roads Levy" wherein each household contributed USD 3.00 per month for six months to be channelled towards repair of major roads in **residential areas only**. 1.5km of road was totally reconstructed and road equipment consisting of a Grader, Tipper and Front End Loader were purchased using 'roads levy funds' for USD 352, 000 to ensure sustainable road maintenance programmes.



d) **HOUSING PROVISION INNOVATIONS**

The provision of low cost affordable housing is a pre-requisite if we are to have sustainable cities where shelter, a basic right is provided. With

Central government cutting back on long term loans for infrastructure development, local authorities are finding themselves having to think outside the box to provide affordable housing.

Our model for low cost housing provision is three pronged, direct provision of housing, self-financing models and engagement of private developers.

The City has housing waiting list of about 5 000 people. The intervention of strategic partners has seen a reduction on the housing waiting list from about 15 000 to 5000.

i) Self-financing housing model

Council works out costs the services (water, sewer, roads etc) to come up with an average cost of a stand per square metre.

The project entails beneficiaries' contributing money for purchase of the stand and cost of installing services (water, sewer, roads, and electricity) through direct payment over a period 8-12 months).

Through this initiative council implemented the following projects;

- **Hillside Extension** 384 low cost housing stands
- **Target Kopje Extension** = 80 (medium income)
- **Eastvale Extension** = 18
- **Rhodene Extension** (off Carry) = 22
- **Mucheke Medium density** = 31

The self-financing model of housing provision bears testimony of the good relationship and trust that residents have in their local authority.

Regular feedback meetings are held with beneficiaries as the servicing goes underway in the spirit of accountability and transparency in the use of public resources.

ii) Housing Partnership with other Private Developers

The City of Masvingo has also partnered private land developers in the provision of housing by selling virgin land for servicing and selling to potential beneficiaries on Council waiting list. The approach has gone a long way in alleviating housing need. Housing projects implemented by Private Developer include;

- ZIMRE Park - 363 low density stands
- Runyararo South West (KMP) - 500 (low cost housing stands)
- Victoria Range Housing Scheme - 10 000 (housing units)

This is a massive housing project whose thrust is on low cost housing and is being implemented incrementally and allows for parallel development



Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda is our collective responsibility if we are to achieve its goals. Inasmuch as we have to think outside the box to raise funds to implement programmes that transform our communities I think that governments need to prioritise provision of concessionary funds to local authorities to fund health and sanitation.

The need for local government to use public funds transparently for the betterment of our communities needs no further emphasis, it is a must.

I thank you