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UNDP Calls for Partnership in Mainstreaming Gender in ICTs

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has called for strengthened partnerships in ensuring that girls have access to the use of ICTs as tools for achieving their individual goals, but also as opportunities to stimulate many girls to become critical thinkers and creators of the technologies which are important to address the most pressing issues faced today.

Speaking on behalf of the UNDP Resident Representative, ai Gregory Salli who is the UNDP Assistant Resident Representative said that ICTs could resolve some of the challenges faced today – from poverty to health. He said that the conference was specifically an opportunity to encourage girls take up careers in the width of ICTs - from programming to coding, cyber-security to computernetworking and an entire range of ICT functionalities.

“As UNDP, we are always keen on partnerships that embrace sustainable development and, in this case, partnerships that foster women’s well-being and importantly bridge the digital divide between men and women. We believe that this conference and the follow-up actions are important steps to introducing young women to the world of ICTs and a means of attaining our gender strategic goals of empowering women and ensuring gender equality,” he said.

He underscored that the conference in as far as UNDP was concerned, was a means to a broader objective of achieving gender equality. He said, “the rallying cry for us in the United Nations System is to leave no one behind. As UNDP and in collaboration with our partners, we are determined to ensure that actions from this conference reach further to rural communities in Chief Chamuka, Chief Muwezya and Chief Nkomeshya. In these targeted locations, we want to establish ICT hubs that these girls will use as information centres and therefore be able to access training and mentoring. The chiefdoms are female-led whilst Chief Chamuka is a renowned HeforShe Champion”.

The Honourable Minister of Transport and Communications, Dr. Brian Mushimba graced the occasion and embraced the UNDP call for traditional authorities to be active stakeholders in the information society and support initiatives aimed at promoting ICTs skills, especially for girls.

The conference, which is an annual event brings together over 200 girls from across the country from different communities to experience ICTs as a development tool. This year, Zambia Information and Communications Technology (ZICTA), which is the main organizer, partnered with UNDP on 25th – 26th April 2019 in Lusaka. It is a conference organized to advocate and promote the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) amongst girls. This year the conference gathered iconic women in ICTs such as Susan Mulikita, who is the first female Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Liquid Telecom, FSDZ Policy and Digital Finance Advisor – Charity Chikumbi, BongoHive inspired project owners. It was packed with empowering messages from online financial management to cyber-security and filmmaking. From ICT industry management to development of networks and software.

“ICTs could resolve some of the challenges faced today – from poverty to health.”
Gregory Salli, Assistant Resident Representative, Governance and Gender
Girls in ICT Indaba – Photo Focus

ZICTA Director General – Patrick Mutimushi

CEC LIQUID Chief Executive Officer – Susan Mulikita

BONGOHIVE Co-founder – Lukonga Lindunda

UNDP Gender Specialist – Della Mawale Yerokun

UNDP Head of Governance and Gender – Gregory Sail with the Minister of Communications and Transport – Dr. Brian Mushimba

Zambian Music Icon – Kondwani Kaira aka Chef 187
Towards the Development of a Green Finance Policy Implementation Plan

Participants at a workshop held by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resource (Department of Climate Change and Natural Resources Management) through the BIOFIN Zambia Project Team have recommended to develop an implementation plan for the National Green Finance Policy, which is being proposed for establishment together with Green Bond Guidelines which will be spearheaded by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the listing rules which will be led by the Lusaka Securities exchange (LuSE).

The workshop, which focused on Green Finance orientation, was held from the 4th to the 5th of April 2019 at Chaminuka Lodge and Game Reserve in Chongwe District and attracted participants from key government Ministries, Quasi-government institutions, the financial sector as well as local and international resource persons that provided insights on the importance of green finance and its contribution to ameliorating climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use. Its main objective was to build capacity among key stakeholders that are earmarked to constitute the Technical Working Group to spearhead the development of Zambia’s National Green Finance Policy (NGFP) and Implementation Plan.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Deputy Country Director, Mr. Sergio Valdini said that the use of green financing gives a ray of hope for specific initiatives that enhance favorable environmental protection outcomes, especially in the face of a tight fiscal space that Zambia is facing which has resulted in low budgetary allocation and releases to environmental protection. He also indicated that Government has a critical role to play in the legislation, harmonization and creation of green standards and tariffs, financing for sustainable natural resource-based green economies and focusing on decision making towards Sustainable Development Goals. However, market driven transformation is also needed from the financial sector who are adapting their business models, skills and incentives to match the risk-reward and maturity needs of sustainable investments.

The Deputy Country Director further stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender in the transition to environmental sustainability given that women continue to face disproportionate impacts both from biodiversity loss and gender-blind conservation measures even though they play a critical role as primary land managers and resource users.

The consultative meetings resulted in prioritization of seven (7) finance solutions that are part of Zambia’s Biodiversity Finance Plan (BFP). A further consultative meeting that was convened at Chaminuka Lodge on the 8th of February 2019 for Directors at the Ministry of Finance, National Development Planning, Environmental Management and Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources unanimously agreed that the development of Zambia’s National Green Finance Policy was necessary.

“Due to the unprecedented biodiversity loss and the threats that climate change is posing to Zambia, there is need for government and the private sector to raise their efforts to address climate change related challenges”.

UNDP Deputy Country Director, Sergio Valdini
During the Chaminuka workshop, BIOFIN Country Team Leader, Mr. Bruno Mweemba indicated that the budgetary allocation for Environmental Protection (biodiversity inclusive) had remained low at around 0.6% of the national budget compared to other budget functions such as general public services (30.4%), economic affairs (26.1%), education (17.9%), health (9.3%), Defense (6.2%), public order and safety (4%) etc. It was further indicated that of the 0.6% allocation towards environmental protection, Government had only managed to finance 26% of the budget whilst the larger portion of the budget was financed through donor support. Following the costing of the finance needs for the NBSAP and the National Climate Change Implementation Plan, Mr. Mweemba indicated that Zambia had an annual deficit of over $960m per annum through to 2030 hence the need for innovative finance mechanisms to bridge this finance gap.

Centre for International Climate Research (CICERO) Senior Advisor, Mr. Alexander Berg presented an overview on green finance and further outlined the various instruments that characterise the green finance market. As part of his reflections, he indicated that Green finance cannot fix biodiversity, climate change and desertification alone which still calls for behavioral change. He further guided that there is need to always start small by focusing on obvious green aspects such as energy, resilient agriculture and forest regeneration.

Through the provision of definition of green bonds, the issuance process and global trends Berg indicated that investors are increasingly paying attention to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues and that investors are divesting from non-sustainable assets thus an increase in demand for greenbonds. He explained that green bonds are like any other bonds but emphasises that proceeds are to be directed to green projects which are defined in a green bond framework by the issuer.

Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI), Programme Manager for Africa Markets, Mr. Olumide Lala noted that in Africa, there are several challenges impacting on the growth of green bond markets which include; “volume of bankable projects and robust project pipelines, small investments that would not be attractive to large institutional investors, risk-averse investors with limited capacity to analyze green investments and perceived costs of issuing green bonds”. He, however, indicated that some of the key issues to consider when developing green bonds markets may include; Multiyear funded and market-wide programme, Support National High-level Policies and Strategies (NDCs) and partner with all the key market stakeholders to ensure strong buy-in (Capacity Building).

Meanwhile, Senior Advisor for Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) in Africa Mr. Adrian Bertrand, said the integration of ESG has emerged as a strategy and practice in investment decisions and active ownership. He also emphasized on responsible investing because; (i) Materiality i.e. increasing recognition within the financial community that ESG factors often play a material role in determining risk and return (ii) Market Demand i.e. growing demand from beneficiaries and investors for greater transparency about how and where the money is being invested (iii) Regulation i.e. higher levels of regulatory guidance that incorporating ESG factors is part of an investor’s fiduciary duty to their clients and beneficiaries. Mr. Bertrand also highlighted how South Africa is integrating responsible investments into its financial system and investment process.

A roadmap in designing a Green Financial System, was presented by Africa Network Coordinator for UNEP Finance Initiative and Independent Sustainability Consultant, Ms. Caroline Wakesho Sonje. Ms. Sonje indicated that a Sustainable Finance Roadmap provides direction and policy signals and sets framework that enables the financial sector to better contribute to the transition of a more resilient and sustainable economy, consistent with global, national and regional goals. She highlighted that there was no single formula for developing national sustainable finance road maps.
Transforming Lives Through Stones: The Case of Cobblestone Paving

After a 28-day intensive training course in cobblestone paving which was part of the broader programme to empower youths with relevant aspects of cobblestone cutting, chiseling and laying techniques as a means of employment, Georgina Chama, 45 years old, is now the founder and chairperson of Cobblestone Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Lusaka province. Owing to the training that Georgina received in 2018 with support from UNDP and National Council for Construction (NCC), the cooperative, which was her initiative as part of her Return to Work proposal, was set up with a total number of 30 members. Her Return to Work plan, which was submitted to TEVETA, drew enough attention and interest. Subsequently, she trained 15 males and 15 females who are now available for employment with technical skills in road paving using cobblestone techniques.

“I was identified by the Association of Women in mining in Zambia to participate in the initial training in cobblestone paving. This was due to my passion in the area of small-scale mining particularly as it relates to not-so-expensive minerals such as cobblestones. I applied for the advertised course and participated for 28 days. I was amongst the 57 women and youths that were trained. The Return to Work component is what triggered my interest in writing a proposal to TEVETA, which they accepted and trained my 30 identified members”.

Like many young Zambians, Georgina’s employees are amongst the many people who are unemployed. They are young and they are female. Young people in Zambia represent at least 36 percent of the country’s 17.6 million people and yet they continue to be under-represented in socio-economic activities with unemployment rate at its highest at 7.79.

In 2018, the UNDP’s programme on inclusive growth and poverty reduction organized a programme that would contribute towards empowering youths through employment. In partnership with the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development (MMMD) and supported by the Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union Development Minerals Programme. Overall, the project provided capacity building opportunity to over 3000 small scale mining entrepreneurs in in Business and Entrepreneurship Skills, Market Analysis and Investment Promotion in Development the Minerals Sector and included the active use of cobblestone. Many others earn a livelihood by supplying goods and services to Development Minerals operations.

“The aim of the project was to build capacity amongst the youths and women with a focus on empowering them in all relevant aspects of cobblestone cutting, chiseling and laying techniques as a means for employment.

The capacity building activities under the development minerals programme is to increase the sector’s productivity, better manage mining operations; adhere to national and international environmental and health standards; and prevent conflict through effective community relations”. Lyapa Manza, Project Manager

The training for 2018 was focused on providing a programme that brought together individuals from all over the country and interested in the value addition of cobblestones. Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) interfaces with many development issues and has potential to make a significant contribution to economic and social development in many countries. The sub sector can contribute to unlocking women’s and youth employment opportunities in Zambia.

This programme has brought renewed hope among young people and women in Zambia, as it is being implemented at a time when the Government through the Road Development Agency is promoting the use of development minerals (cobblestone) in road paving through the Pave Zambia 2000 Project.
The cooperative, according to Georgina, expects to begin tendering for works with Pave Zambia 2000. She hopes that the cooperative will be an opportunity for self-employment and empowerment to the many youths in the cooperative.

The programme as a UNDP initiative is earmarked to benefit over 4,300 youth and women, who will be participating through the “return to work” initiatives that involve setting up cooperatives and small-scale companies to create work opportunities and lift people out of poverty. Through the return to work model, graduates will be supported with small grants and through linkages to industry and market players.

This project is funded by the ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme and is a three-year, €13.1 million capacity building programme that aims to build the profile, and improve the management, of Development Minerals. The programme is an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, financed by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by UNDP and Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development.

The ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme is implemented at both the regional and country levels. At the regional level, the programme conducts capacity building activities with participants from forty ACP countries through regional training workshops, field trips, the production of guidance products and knowledge exchange. The programme will also host a final conference to enhance the knowledge sharing activities conducted during the programme. Participants of regional training workshops implement the skills and knowledge that they have gained from the training through return to work plans. At the country level, in depth capacity building is undertaken with six focus countries: Cameroon (Central Africa); Guinea - Conakry (West Africa); Uganda (East Africa); Zambia (Southern Africa); Jamaica (Caribbean) and Fiji (Pacific).

Cobblestone mining and paving in other parts of the world is a commonplace since ancient times.

"I was identified by the Association of Women in mining in Zambia to participate in the initial training in cobblestone paving. This was due to my passion in the area of small-scale mining particularly as it relates to not-so-expensive minerals such as cobblestones. I applied for the advertised course and participated for 28 days.

Georgina Chama, Project Manager"
The UNDP electoral cycle project has been providing support to civil society focused specifically on enhanced women’s participation and gender equality. In particular, priority areas have included assessing women’s role and function in political party structures and capacity for meaningful decision-making. This support represents a strong component of the inclusive aspects of political participation within the new electoral project *Democracy Strengthening in Zambia*.

As part of assessing the gender pledges of political parties for 2016 elections, UNDP has produced an analysis making specific comparison to what pledges were made and what was accomplished. The aim of this exercise is to compile information to establish a foundation of baseline data that can be built upon in subsequent activities in the run up to the next electoral cycle, concluding with the 2021 elections.

UNDP believes critical mass from a unified network of civil society organizations will be important to raise the profile of women in Zambian politics. As such, nine representatives of relevant women’s organizations, including representatives from the media and legal fields attended a two-days interactive workshop in Chaminuka. Also, in attendance was the Ministry of Gender. The workshop was aimed at creating a catalytic environment within which future activities may be designed and adopted to improve the participation of women in all aspects of Zambian political life. Participants reviewed and actively discussed the 50/50 Gender Parity Analysis Report developed under the electoral project 2015-2018. They developed an action plan to feed into the new electoral cycle project 2019-2022 with the aim of enhancing women’s electoral and political participation. Broad consensus was reached to activate a network with the aim to make the outcomes of the report truly successful in practice.
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