

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE,
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF ZIMBABWE,
Hon N M NDHLOVU**

***Enhancing Capacity of Landlocked Developing Countries to
Address Climate Change and water-related challenges during
COVID-19 era: Experiences and Solutions***

3 NOVEMBER 2021

Water Pavilion

- **Your Excellency Mr. E. Courtenay Rattray, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States**
- **Excellencies**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is very clear that the effects of climate change are disproportionately borne by those who least contributed to it, the developing countries particularly the African Countries. Ladies and gentlemen, the situation is far worse for land locked countries like Zimbabwe. I want to thank the organizers for this very important event for providing a platform to focus on these vulnerable countries with the hope that our peculiar circumstances will drive us towards shared solutions to both the COVID 19 pandemic and the Climate Change crisis.

Zimbabwe has in the last three to four decades experienced increases in temperatures, extreme weather events and changes in the weather patterns. The frequency and magnitude of droughts, floods, heatwaves and erratic rainfall patterns has noticeably increased. Tropical Cyclone Idai is still fresh in our minds, affecting an estimated 270,000 people in Zimbabwe. More than 340 lives were lost, and many others are still missing, villages were completely buried, a significant number of surviving households lost everything including shelter. Agriculture, schools and health facilities all suffered heavy impacts. Roads and bridges were severely damaged and some 1,500km of the road network was rendered unusable for months, affecting market access.

This story is not unique to Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi, but one that humanity is increasingly confronting, and this will intensify if the rhetoric that we have been hearing from World Leaders at this COP 26 and in many other platforms is not translated to urgent action.

The agriculture sector in Zimbabwe provides a major source of livelihood for over 70% of the country's population and the sector is largely rainfall dependent. The high temperatures and precipitation irregularities caused by climate change are causing arid environments and increased water scarcity that makes it difficult for predictable agriculture. Livestock production hasn't been spared

either, from declining pasture yields to increased pests and disease incidences, all influenced by climate change.

Climate change impacts heavily on food security of smallholder farmers whose operations are not covered by irrigation schemes. Where communities used to easily access water through shallow wells, they now need to dig deeper to tap up the water. Increased water scarcity is seen in depreciating ground water levels as the water tables are becoming deeper. This is clear evidence that the groundwater is getting depleted owing to a drier climate. Increasing water scarcity is also affecting the productive sectors of the economy such as mining, energy, manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.

Hydro-power contributes a significant proportion to the country's electricity generation, contributing an estimated 50% of the energy mix at its peak, with potential to increase to 70%. Recurrent droughts have led to the decrease in water levels of major reservoirs including Lake Kariba which affects electricity generation with subsequent impact on other sectors.

Another weather catastrophe was the Tugwi-Mukosi floods of 2013-2014, which led to the displacement of thousands of communities in Masvingo province. This was unimaginable just a few years previously. But it happened and there is no telling that we have seen the end of such!!

The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the impact of climate change by presenting additional costs to the economy. Global logistics were disrupted at unprecedented levels and for countries without access to the seas, we were at the mercy of lockdowns and travel restrictions from neighbouring countries. Again this is not a story unique to Zimbabwe but to all other landlocked countries.

I'm not here to mourn about the desperate situation landlocked countries face, but to demonstrate that there are solutions if we all worked together.

Zimbabwe has made efforts to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change and I will highlight some solutions that we have implemented.

The country has developed supportive policies and strategies that include the National Climate Policy in 2017, the National Climate Change Response Strategy in 2014, National Renewable Energy Policy of 2019, National Agriculture Policy Framework of 2018 and National Biofuels Policy. In addition, the country has communicated its revised ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC together with the Low Emissions Development Strategy. The revised NDC commits to a 40% economy wide per-capita greenhouse gas emissions reduction target by 2030 and includes an adaptation component.

As I speak, the country has made significant progress in its National Adaptation Planning (NAP) process. Among the priorities in the NAP process and the revised Nationally Determined Contribution's adaptation component are early warnings and disaster risk reduction, climate smart agriculture, climate resilient infrastructure development, and resilient and sustainable water resources development.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe is finalizing the development of its Water Resources Masterplan to guide water resources development and management. The process incorporated future climate scenario projections to guide water resources development and management. The masterplan acknowledges the projected increased rainfall variability against an increasing demand for water and proposes measures such as sustainable catchment management, afforestation and reforestation, rainwater harvesting, wetlands conservation, efficient water resources utilization and waste water re-use and recycling.

In November 2020, Zimbabwe launched the National Development Strategy 1 which charts policies, institutional reforms and national priorities needed, from 2021-2025. Climate action is at the heart of the plan which is addressed in most of the sectors.

Climate change solutions that Zimbabwe is promoting for scaling up and replication include:

- Climate-smart rain-fed agriculture
 - o Promotion of “*Pfumvudza/Intwasa*” which is a conservation practice that promotes water use efficiency and enhancing soil moisture management on rain-fed lands;
 - o Increased use of water-efficient drip irrigation systems
 - o Promotion of seed and animal varieties that are tolerant to extreme weather events;
- Training of smallholder farmers on rainwater harvesting and moisture conservation. In the water sector – we are promoting rainwater harvesting practices, use of water saving practices, recycling and sinking of boreholes.
- Improved management of wetlands – just this year Zimbabwe adopted a Wetlands Management Policy and Guidelines to enhance the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation,
- In the energy sector we are promoting ethanol blending, solar water heaters, energy efficiency improvements, increasing use of hydropower generation in the energy mix, and the refurbishment and electrification of the rail infrastructure.

Let me outline some areas where Zimbabwe requires enhanced capacity to be able to promote climate action and post pandemic recovery.

Zimbabwe requires increased access to adequate financial support to implement our adaptation and mitigation strategies to achieve the

goal set in our revised Nationally Determined Contribution. We need to be able to scale up solutions that are working. We need to create green jobs and enhance the contribution of renewables in our energy mix.

We urgently require predictable, adequate and accessible resources from the international community. I hope that developed countries will be able to deliver on the long-awaited promise to raise at least US\$100 billion every year in climate finance to support developing countries' transition to low carbon and climate resilient development pathways. It is my hope that landlocked developing countries will be assisted in accessing support for enhanced climate action.

We also require affordable and better technologies – to strengthen adaptation in agriculture and water sectors; to build resilient infrastructure in particular roads; and to accelerate energy transition.

We need capacity building support. For example, towards identifying and preparing bankable projects to secure financial resources for climate change adaptation and mitigation needs and national capacities to monitor progress that we are making on climate action.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you, Under Secretary General, of Zimbabwe's commitment to implement the Vienna Programme of

Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I thank you.