

## **MGOS RESPONSE AND QUESTIONS FROM THE CSOs IN ZAMBIA TO THE VNR OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA**

Various CSOs networks under the auspices of the national CSO platform on SDGs commend the government of Zambia for the progress in the implementation of programmes contributing to the progress on SDGs.

However as civil society we note that we need to strengthen our engagement and collaboration with government in the development processes (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) in the VNRs and the SDG national plans as a whole. The policy dialogue space in terms of access to information on SDGs; inclusiveness of inputs from a variety of national actors and CSO networks should further be strengthened too.

As Civil Society we are further calling on government to enact the budgeting and planning bill of 2019 to enhance adequate resource allocation to various sectors of the economy. The recent impact of Covid-19 and Debt continues to be a huge stumbling block to development. Debt repayment has now overtaken a huge part of the budget leaving little room for spending on SDG implementation.

Key asks;

- Government must establish a more inclusive process for CSO participation and redefine its criteria of selecting CSOs participating on SDGs in Zambia.
- To curb vulnerability and poverty, government must increase social sector spending.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is government doing to improve social dialogue on the procedures and processes of the implementation of SDGs and provide clearly laid reporting mechanisms on SDGs in the country?
2. What is government doing to ensure the effective implementation of the programmes that support SDGs realization in Zambia?
3. What is government doing to ensure that the upcoming budget matches the planned programmes in the implementation of the SDGs?

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We note that the Government of the Republic Zambia is making progress in the implementation of the SDGs, but challenges of high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality still remain high in the country given that the current restrictive fiscal space will unlikely stimulate the economy for sustainable growth and social transformation.

We also further note that despite the fact that government has introduced a number of measures to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, the pandemic has further deepened these inherent structural challenges. In particular, inadequate social protection packages, fragile public health systems and devastating effects on the labour market, more especially those in the informal economy where precarious work and loss of incomes persistent.

We call for specific government interventions that focus a human-centered development and ecologically sustainable path whose response must be inclusive, integrative and comprehensive, involving all national actors in the drive to achieve SDGs. Specific measures need to be put forward to ensure employment is created and sustained allocations towards social spending in the national budget are increased. The social protection programs should be scaled up and coverage should be expansive to ensure social inclusion, especially for informal economy operators and other vulnerable groups such as the disabled. The government should also consider targeted waiving of fuel, electricity and water tariffs to increase the disposable income of households. The scaling up social dialogue, financing of SMEs, information management tracking systems and prudent communication among other stakeholders will be necessary for greater progress on the SDGs in the years ahead.

### Questions:

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2. What is government doing to ensure that the upcoming budget matches the planned programs in the implementation of the SDGs?