

Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt & Development (ZIMCODD)

National Development
Strategy 1

**Analysis from
A Gender &
Social Justice
Perspective**



OPINION PAPER
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BACKGROUND

The Government of Zimbabwe on 16 November 2020 launched the successor policy to the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP-2018 2020) titled the First five-year National Development Strategy (NDS1) (2020-21). The NDS1 will run under the theme “Towards a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle- Income Society by 2030” While the TSP focused on stabilising the macro-economy and the financial sector, the NDS1 is aimed at realising vision 2030 and addressing the global aspirations of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063. The broad objectives of the NDS1 include strengthening macroeconomic stability, low and stable inflation, a stable exchange rate, inclusive and equitable real growth in the Gross Domestic Product(GDP), promoting new enterprise development, employment and job creation and industrialising and modernising the economy. The NDS1 will be implemented against a background of various challenges related to gender inequality and social injustices linked to governance, the macro economic climate, climate change and COVID-19 among others. Against this background, this paper seeks to analyse the NDS 1 from a gender and social justice perspective.

Social Justice Values

Equality - Social justice posits that citizens should have fair access to goods and services.

Equity - The concept of equity stems from the realization that the principle of equality or uniform distribution is not always feasible or implementable due to the existing injustices that would have prevented certain individuals from accessing public goods and resources in the first place. As such citizens are expected to get what is right for them as well as being empowered to overcome the barriers that hindered them from accessing the resources.

Rights - In terms of social justice rights can be divided into two: legal rights and moral rights, such as basic human rights, liberties, entitlements and right peculiar to certain territories.

Participation - In the context of social justice participation means involving people in making decisions that impact their lives.

1.1 Objectives of the paper

1. analyse the NDS1 from a Gender and Social Justice perspective
2. analyze the salient issues of the NDS1
3. identify its gaps and strengths and proffer recommendations

2. Gender and Social Justice Perspectives

The concept of social justice is generally concerned with the fair and equitable distribution of resources, power and obligations to all citizens in society irrespective of their gender, age, religion, political affiliation, race or ethnicity. Social justice is underpinned by values of equality, equity, rights and participation (Khechen, 2013). While a gender perspective can be looked at from two angles: 'integrationist mainstreaming', which integrates gender equality into the analyses of issues. Integration promotes the incorporation of gender concerns and issues and analysis into the existing development priorities of the government without changing the overall agenda. The second dimension is 'transformative' or 'agenda-setting mainstreaming', which seeks to transform the existing development agenda, and enable women and men to be active participants in decision-making processes that affect their daily lives, through the systematic application of a gender perspective.

3. An Analysis of NDS 1 from a Gender and Social Justice Perspective

3.1 Analysis of Key Pillars of NDS1

The key national priorities of the NDS 1 are Economic Growth and Stability, Food Security and Nutrition, Governance, Moving the Economy Up the value chain and Structural Transformation, Human Capital Development, Environmental Protection, Climate Resilience and Natural Resources Management, Housing Delivery, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and Digital Economy, Health and Well being, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities, Image Building and International Engagement and Re-Engagement, Devolution and Decentralisation Youth, Sports, Art, Culture and Gender Mainstreaming. The national priorities exclude gender, rather gender is considered as a cross cutting issue, and this has its dangers as will be discussed in the following sections.

The national priorities have been well identified to ensure that the development plan addresses the major issues of equality and equity, and ultimately promote inclusive development processes. Development challenges in Zimbabwe mainly center around issues of the economy, especially policy contradictions and inconsistencies, governance, dilapidated infrastructure, poor service delivery and natural disasters linked to climate change which the national priorities have sufficiently taken into account as fundamentals for the enjoyment of socio-economic rights that are at the center of gender and social justice. The NDS1 identifies the importance of inclusive growth, which is one of the fundamental principles of social justice.

A national development plan naturally should confirm the vision or aspirations of a nation, its foundational values and its existing global and national commitments and this is the case with NDS1. The NDS1 borrows the thrust of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "leaving no one behind" as key to inclusive growth and is aligned to all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5, namely, "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all women and girls" as well as the National Constitution one of whose national objectives is gender equality. The national priorities seem to be providing for a number of socioeconomic rights that include the right to public services, right to decent living conditions (subsistence rights) through rights to food and water among others, the rights of particular social groups such as women, young people, children, people with disability, rights to natural resources such as land by ensuring land rights among others. Because many socio-economic rights tend to have a disproportional effect on the lives of women and other marginalized groups, who in some cases depend on

3.2 Women and the Informal Sector

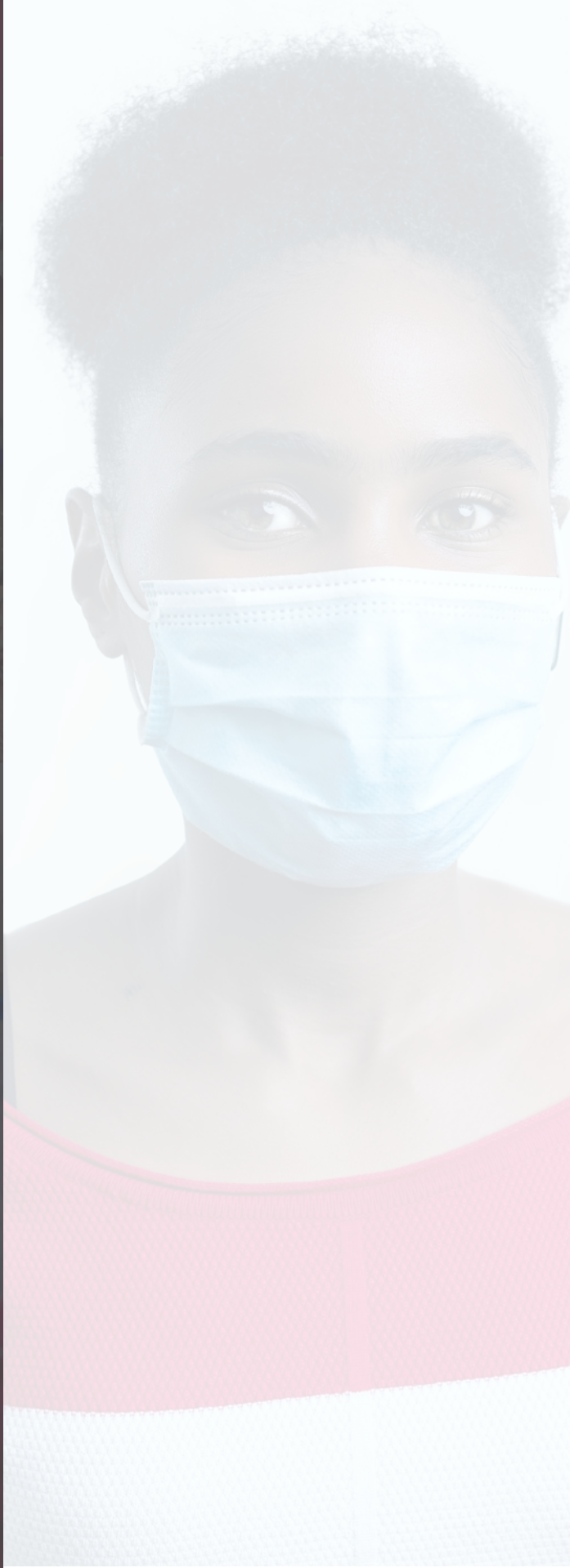
Women in Zimbabwe have greater income vulnerability from informal, low paid, and insecure work. They are over represented in the lower employment categories of own account workers(38.8%) and contributing family worker (0.6%). In 2019, the national unemployment rate stood at 16.4%, and higher for females at 17.2% compared to 15.7% for males. Access to decent and secure employment in Zimbabwe has increasingly become a challenge. The youth (15-35 years)unemployment level is much higher at 20.8% (of which 22.3%are females and 19.7%male).¹ The NDS 1 recognises the role of decent work in the COVID-19 recovery period and in the informal economy, with specific strategies for monitoring progress. The NDS 1's specific targets are likely to positively impact on women. The targets for decent work include:

1. Increase the level of formal employment from 24% in 2020 to 30% by 2025;
2. Reduce precarious employment rate from 19% to 14% by 2025;
3. Increase the proportion of informal sector workers covered by Occupational Safety and Health Services from 0% to 20% by 2025.

One of the decent work strategies is prioritisation of development and implementation of a national action plan to facilitate the transition from informality to formality by the SMEs sector. Considering the fact that more females are active in the informal sector than males, comprising about 70% of the informal sector players (ZIMSTAT, 2014; ZCIEA, 2016), such recognition of decent work in this sector brings security and protection to women whose operations have been seriously affected by COVID-19.

However, on the financing of the NDS1 the document seems to put emphasis on taxation, although it mentions several options that include fiscal revenues, loans, grants, public entities own resources and private sector resources among other. The continued thrust of penalisation of the informal economy through taxation, will have its toll on women as this fails to take into consideration the negative effects that COVID-19 and lockdown measures have had on the sector. Transitioning from informalization to formality should be based on supporting the informal economy through integrated strategies that include growth strategies and quality employment generation, regulatory environment, organization, representation and social dialogue, equality, gender ethnicity, race, caste, disability, age; entrepreneurship, skills, finance, management, access to markets; extension of social protection, social security and social transfers; local (rural and urban) development and not just be based on taxing the informal economy (ILO R204, Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015). Cost recovery trajectory which fails to take cognisance of socio-economic services that are mostly consumed by women and girls can eventually lead to deepened poverty especially if incomes remain low.

The NDS1 is also silent on policy directions on legal actions required for women to enjoy decent work such as Ratification and Domestication of ILO Convention 190: Harassment and Violence at the Workplace.



3.3 Integrated Social Protection

The NDS 1 provides for an integrated approach to social protection that recognises the women's work and the care economy. Some Social Protection key areas include:

- Reducing Extreme Poverty and Improving Access to Basic Social Services
 - Provision of sanitary wear for female learners in school. Lack of sanitary wear has been one of the barriers to access to education for female learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in rural areas; 62% of female learners who miss school every month do so because of lack of sanitary wear (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2019).
- Improving Care and Protection of Vulnerable groups
 - Introduction of children and old age grants. These will go a long way in assisting women who are mostly responsible for caring for children and the elderly. Furthermore, women constitute the majority of the elderly in Zimbabwe, 60% against 40% males (CIA, World Factbook).
 - Support safe spaces for pregnant women at Maternity Waiting Homes (MWHs) including provision of food. Maternity waiting homes usually target high risk women such as first time mothers, those with history of obstetric challenges and those residing far from health facilities. Health facilities assign nurses to manage these homes as an extension of antenatal care. UNFPA (2020) revealed that some of the challenges facing maternity waiting homes include congestion in the facilities making it difficult to meet the demand while the women are often idle waiting for the delivery date. Some women have other conditions such as malnutrition that need to be attended to. Support to MWHs will therefore contribute to equitable and timely access to obstetric and neonatal care and eventual reduction of maternal and neonatal deaths
- Improving livelihoods for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Enhancing Job and Income Security
- Expansion of social security to informal economy

All the above proposed social protection interventions are critical for promoting gender equality and social justice particularly considering the target groups for those interventions as well as the fact that NDS 1 is being implemented in a challenging social and economic environment in which economic growth remains suppressed owing to COVID-19 induced production, trade and tourism limitations. The commitment by the government to provide unemployment benefits and children and old age grants is a positive development for women who are mostly responsible for providing care to these vulnerable groups. The integration, harmonization and strengthening of social protection programmes is a welcome development from a gender and social justice perspective especially because they will be implemented from a leave no one behind perspective. There is also a promise to reduce extreme poverty and to increase access to basic social services and narrowing inequalities. To enhance job and income security the government intends to increase the coverage of social insurance to both the formal and informal sector. Pension reforms will also be accelerated to preserve the value of pensions. These interventions aim to achieve equity in social service provision.

The government also committed to the provision of subsidies for critical areas of interest to women and girls by widening the subsidy policy to agriculture, transport and food with a view to cushion vulnerable members of society. This will be done through a more targeted approach that will be informed by a survey to identify vulnerable members of society. In addition, NDS 1 provides for revamping rural agro-industry, access to food markets, reconfiguration of horticulture industry towards private sector driven, paired with a transformative rural horticulture sub-sector under the Presidential Horticulture Scheme, covering 1.8 million rural households. These initiatives are very central to women's livelihoods as they dominate rural areas as well as rural horticulture.

3.4 An analysis of the Approaches and Strategies from a Gender and Social Justice Perspective

a) Gender Mainstreaming as a cross cutting issue

Gender mainstreaming is considered as one of the cross-cutting issues in recognition of its importance for development. The NDS1 highlights that gender mainstreaming is important in reducing tensions that can arise from gender imbalances in society. By placing emphasis on these issues, the government, through the NDS1, aims to enhance inclusive economic growth by enhancing the participation of those sections of society that were traditionally excluded from mainstream economic activity. In terms of gender mainstreaming the government seeks to promote gender equality and enhance the participation of women in development processes.

The process of mainstreaming suggests deep changes in established procedures and cultures of institutions so that the issue becomes integrated. There is always the danger that by putting the issue in the mainstream, it will disappear from sight; in becoming the responsibility of everyone, it becomes the responsibility of no one. Furthermore, National development plans represent the State's policy on development priorities and strategies while gender equality policies provide a road map for the State to achieve gender equality. Integrating gender into national development plans, therefore, requires the government to secure high-level commitment to gender and development priorities, action programmes and resources for implementation, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, and targets and indicators as informed by the SDGs.



An analysis of the NDS1 reveals a gap on gender analysis on most of the situation analysis sections. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males. It examines their roles, their access and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. It is the first and most critical step for gender mainstreaming. It precedes any gender mainstreaming action to help determine areas and methods of intervention, by ensuring that interventions are not based on incorrect assumptions. Absence of a gender analysis results in gender blind interventions, that are designed from the perspective of men and ultimately do not meaningfully address the conditions of women.

Relatedly, the NDS 1 lacks sex disaggregated data including indicators of the different national priorities as well as the results framework. There are thematic areas that naturally should present sex disaggregated data because of the gendered roles and responsibilities as well as access and control over resources in those sectors such as Food and Nutrition Security, Housing Delivery, Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management, ICT and Digital Economy, Human Capital Development, Health and Wellbeing and Transport Infrastructure and Utilities yet the situation analysis to these sections as well as the strategies are gender blind.

Gender is conspicuous under cross cutting issues than it is in the national priorities, and this presents serious challenges, especially in the absence of gender sensitive indicators to guide tracking of progress across the various priority areas. For example, despite the acknowledgement of the gender gap in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines and the commitment by NDS1 to address it through inclusive and equitable access to education, the indicator in the results framework just monitors increased uptake of STEM, with no focus on the extent to which the gender gap has been addressed.

Gender is not considered in a manner that shapes the discussion of how, inter alia, the economy, health, agriculture, industry and tourism are differentially experienced by women, men, boys and girls, requiring an approach to development that takes such inequality into account at all stages. Hence from this perspective the NDS 1 does not sufficiently integrate a gender analysis or gender mainstreaming approach in transformational ways.



Regarding key strategies and measures to achieving gender equality, the NDS 1 proposes the following:

Key Strategies	Measures to Achieve Gender Equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Further mainstreaming of gender sensitive policies and legislation; ii. Integrating gender issues into national and sectoral economic policies, national budget policies; iii. Gender Responsive Budgeting -programming and budgeting, which involves identification of gender issues, interventions, budget costings, and setting of performance benchmarks; iv. Prioritisation of resource allocation, disbursement and implementation of national and sectoral gender plans and programmes through; v. Implementation of gender sensitive programmes and projects, targeting women; and vi. Monitoring and evaluation, which involves tracking performance, and feedback for policy review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Youth and women affirmative action; ii. Equal Opportunity for all programs; iii. Promoting women into positions of influence; iv. Promoting equality at all levels of society; v. Advancing women political representation; vi. Youth and women advocacy initiatives; and vii. Enhancing access to financing for women in business
<p>Outcomes of Women and Gender Mainstreaming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Growing women participation in the economy across all sectors; ✓ More women in decision making positions; ✓ Growing women incomes; and ✓ Equal opportunities for women. 	

Government intends to promote gender equality and women empowerment through:

- a) The operationalization of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission to spearhead the gender agenda
- b) Enactment and popularization of the Domestic Violence Act to combat gender- based violence
- c) Prioritization of resource allocation and disbursement to women empowerment programmes
- d) Capitalization of the Women’s Microfinance Bank,
- e) Introduction and enforcement of policies for free maternal health care services with the objective to reduce maternal mortality rates.

The NDS 1 provides for affirmative action which is one of the values of social justice. Affirmative action is provided for with reference to the empowerment of women and young people. The strategy document also targets the financial inclusion of the previously unbanked citizens with the aim of plucking them out of abject poverty thereby promoting inclusive growth for all Zimbabweans.

While the strategies seem to be noble, critical issues to do with social and gender norms that continue to perpetuate women's subordinate position have not been flagged out in the NDS 1. Relatedly, issues of capacity development have not been highlighted yet lack of capacity is one of the challenges to gender equality and women empowerment. For inclusive development processes, both men and women should participate in and contribute to decision making, policy formulation, implementation action, monitoring and evaluation. Women's meaningful participation in decision-making requires more than the presence of more women in institutions and processes. It also requires attention to the deep-rooted socio-cultural inequalities that can act as constraints to women's real inclusion and prevent them from having a voice in these processes. Promoting women's voice in policy, planning and implementation needs to be supported by funding and capacity development.

b) Citizen Participation

The NDS1 promises to expedite devolution to facilitate the participation of citizens in making decisions that affect their lives. This is an important aspect of social justice. Devolution was adopted as a key component of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act 2013 and is recognized as one of the founding values and principles to the Constitution. Devolution seeks to make the governance system community based so that citizens can take ownership of policies that affect their lives. Devolution is expected to expedite service delivery, enhance democracy as well as promote peace and harmony in the country and in the communities. Devolution and decentralization programme in the NDS 1 is meant to provide organizational structures to allow citizens to participate in the planning of development issues but is silent on the role of women and other marginalised groups in devolution processes, yet this is important considering the gendered effects of lack of service delivery and the fact that women are lowly represented in key decision-making structures.

There is an attempt through NDS1 to promote gender equality and social justice through various targeted interventions as well as mainstreamed actions. However, the design of the NDS 1 has key gaps particularly on the promotion of gender equality owing mostly to the treatment of gender mainstreaming as one of the cross-cutting issues, without gender analysis considerations across the various pillars of the strategy as well as limited gender sensitive indicators to track the progress made. The following recommendations are proffered:





A gender responsive NDS1 Results Framework

There is need for advocacy on the integration of gender specific targets and indicators in the NDS 1. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Ministry of Women Affairs and relevant CSOs should spearhead this process.



Gender responsive taxation system

Domestic Resource mobilization through taxation requires a gender responsive taxation system, that takes into account the different conditions and experiences of men and women, especially the conditions in the informal sector in the aftermath of COVID 19 and lock down measures. Tax justice advocacy is therefore critically needed.



Ratification and Domestication of ILO Convention 190 - Harassment and Violence at the Workplace

NDS1 strategies on both formal and informal sector employment should be backed by a progressive legal framework as a critical driver of decent work. This calls for urgent ratification and domestication of the ILO Convention 190 - Harassment and Violence at the Workplace.



Adjust NDS 1 to serve as a Framework for Gender Responsive Service delivery under the Devolution and Decentralisation Thrust of NDS 1

The government should adjust NDS 1 for it to serve as a framework for service delivery where roles and responsibilities of central and local government are clearly outlined. Furthermore, because women have audience at local levels they should be empowered to actively participate in local development spaces, especially in light of the deterioration in service delivery which mostly affects them. CSOs should promote more direct and effective citizen participation by facilitating dialogue between local authorities and citizens with the aim of turning local government institutions into responsive and accountable entities. Civic education and awareness raising initiatives for women, young people and other marginalised groups is therefore important.



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