



Republic of Zambia
GENDER DIVISION

**Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
(1995) and the outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly
(2000)**

In the context of the thirtieth (30th) Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Foreword



Zambia acknowledges 2025 as a year of breakthrough towards sustainable development, because the global community will be commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The year 2025 will also mark ten years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goal number five which promotes gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains a landmark framework advocating for women's rights and outlines strategic objectives across twelve critical areas of concern. This Progress Report which commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, reflects on significant progress made in gender equality and women's empowerment since 1995. There have been substantial advancements in women's political and economic participation, health, education and recognition of women's rights as human rights. Despite these successes, challenges remain, including persistent violence, discrimination as well as institutional barriers faced by women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing disparities, hence, the need for renewed commitment and innovative solutions.

This report tracks the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by government working in collaboration with civil society and international organisations. Further, the report identifies urgent areas for action, successful efforts, best practices as well as lessons learned with emphasis on the ongoing need to address these issues comprehensively.

Zambia looks forward to the future where there is gender equality and will continue to reaffirm its commitment to the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As a country, we shall continue to strengthen our resolve, build on our successes as well as address the gaps that hinder the full attainment of gender equality.

Zambia remains committed to ensure that it creates an environment where every woman and girl can realize their full potential.

Patrick Kangwa (Mr.)
Secretary to the Cabinet

Acknowledgement



The compilation of the national level review report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) was a result of committed work by the staff of the Gender Division with support from other government ministries, quasi government institutions and non-governmental organisations including the Ministries of Green Economy and Environment, Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Labour and Social Security, Community Development and Social Services, Education, Information and Media, Health, Zambia Statistical Agency and other organisations including the Human Rights Commission and National Prosecution Authority. Participants were also drawn from Non-Government Organisations namely, Non-governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating Council, Zambia National Women's Lobby, as well as, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Gender Division wishes to thank all the participants for their invaluable contributions. I also want to thank most sincerely, the United Nations in Zambia for the technical support throughout the process.

Lastly, I also want to thank my members of staff for their untiring effort in ensuring that the country produces this report

Mainga D. Kabika (Mrs.)
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SECTION ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

Core elements of Country level review process

The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BPfA) Country level review process included the preparatory phase which included stakeholder mapping, data collection, review of existing policies and programmes. This involved Identifying relevant stakeholders including government ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs) focusing on women's rights, women's groups, academia and the private sector. This was followed by gathering data on the current situation of women and girls in Zambia. This includes statistics, among others, on education, health, economic participation, political representation and Gender Based Violence (GBV). Further, the next step involved listing and assessing existing national legal and Policy frameworks, as well as, programmes related to gender equality.

The State Party organised workshops with different stakeholders to discuss progress on the BPfA's 12 critical areas of concern, namely; education, health, GBV, economic participation and decision-making. The State Party undertook regional and community consultations to ensure the voices of women and girls from the provinces, districts and rural communities are heard through targeted consultations. The consultations included regional workshops, focus group discussions and community meetings.

The State Party proceeded to prepare a report summarizing the findings from data analysis, stakeholder consultations, and legislation and policy reviews. The report highlights the progress, challenges and obstacles hindering progress on gender equality in Zambia. The report also proposes concrete recommendations for the revision of laws, policies, and programmes to accelerate progress towards the BPfA goals.

The final report will be disseminated widely to government institutions, civil society, media outlets, and the public. It will be a means of advocating for the implementation of the recommendations through workshops, media campaigns, and public dialogues. The State Party will also develop a framework to monitor progress on the implementation of the revised BPfA strategies and hold stakeholders accountable

SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. Most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women

The State Party has made some progress towards gender equality since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995; and established legal framework promoting gender equality, including the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011 and the Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2015. This legislation has created an enabling environment for advancing women and girls rights. Notably, there has been a significant increase in girls' enrolment in primary education, with Zambia achieving gender parity for primary school enrolment. The percentage of women in parliament increased, from 4 percent in 1991 to 18 percent in 2016 and 16 percent in 2021 though still below parity. Women's participation in the informal sector has grown, though challenges remain in formal employment and business ownership.

Despite the legal frameworks, challenges exist in the full implementation and enforcement of these laws to enhance women's and girls' rights. This has contributed to inadequate access to justice for women experiencing Gender Based Violence and a low number of women participating in employment, decision-making positions, and politics. The existing gender inequalities have limited women's access to productive resources such as finance, credit and land. Further, the unequal distribution of income makes women more vulnerable to energy poverty and compromises their resilience to climate shocks. Further, inadequate budgetary allocations and resource limitations hamper effective implementation of gender equality programmes and insufficient data collection and monitoring mechanisms make it difficult to track progress and identify areas needing improvement. Furthermore, gender inequalities are often more pronounced in rural areas, requiring targeted interventions. This is due to limited access to services, wide geographical coverage and terrain that is difficult to navigate. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, COVID 19 pandemic and climate change has disproportionately affected women's livelihoods and access to resources.

2. Top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes

The State Party's top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls through laws, policies, and programmes includes addressing Gender Based Violence, enhancing economic opportunities for women, improving girls access to education, increasing women participation in politics and decision making, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation:

- **Eliminating Violence against women and Girls**

The State Party has enhanced efforts to address Gender Based Violence through the enactment and review of various pieces of legislation which includes; the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022, the Marriage (Amendment) Act, No. 13 of 2023, the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No 1. of 2011 of the laws of Zambia. The Children's Code Act prohibits and criminalises child marriage which is a form of GBV. Further, the Marriage (Amendment) Act renders child

marriage void, whether conducted under customary or statutory law. The amendment also aligns with the definition of a child in the Constitution (Amendment) of Zambia, which states that a child is a person below the age of 18. Furthermore, the Anti Gender Based Violence Act has undergone a review process to enhance its applications.

The State Party has continued investing in one-stop centres and the provision of safe spaces for survivors. To prevent GBV, the State Party has been scaling up GBV prevention and awareness programmes

- **Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises**

The State Party has prioritised promoting financial inclusion to increase women's access to productive resources. These include the 10 percent allocation for women in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and a 30 percent allocation for women enterprises under the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC). The State Party is also supporting women's entrepreneurship by providing funds and training programmes to equip them with the skills and resources required to establish and grow successful businesses. The programmes include the Women Economic Empowerment under the Gender Division and Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED), the Supporting Women's Livelihoods Component under MCDSS.

- **Improving Girls' Education and Health**

The State Party has put girl's education and health as a priority. This has been addressed through implementing programmes such as the Life Skills and Health Education (L-SHE), the Free Education Policy for Primary and Secondary Education as well as the Menstrual Hygiene Management. Additionally, girls are being encouraged to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to bridge the gender gap in these fields. The State Party has also continued to provide universal access to health.

- **Political participation in and representation:**

The State Party has been working on increasing women's' participation in politics and decision-making. This has been done through promoting women's political campaigns by providing training and resources for women candidates to compete effectively in elections. Further, low participation of women in decision-making is due to the deeply rooted patriarchal tendencies in society that are culturally driven. The State Party has been working addressing the discriminatory cultural norms that affect women's participation in politics and decision-making. Through a Cultural Resetting Programmes the State Party has been have community dialogues to discuss societal beliefs that discourage women from taking on leadership roles among others traditional beliefs and cultural norms that are a barrier to achieving gender equality.

- **Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability**

The State Party developed the National Policy on Climate Change in 2016 which is currently under review. The policy has provided for gender differentiation and implementation of gender measures in relation to climate change. The policy aims to improve participation of women,

youth and children in climate change programmes and promote gender equity in accessing finances for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities. The measures are being operationalized in the climate change gender Action Plan (ccGAP). The ccGAP was developed to ensure that climate change, adaptation and mitigation programmes and projects mainstream gender. Further, the 2023 National Gender Policy provides measures to mainstream gender in climate change programmes.

3. Actions taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls

- **Women and girls living in remote and rural areas**

The State Party has put in place legal and policy frameworks to address discrimination faced by marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, the poor rural women and the aged. The Gender Equality and Equality Act No 22 of 2015, prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, or disability, offering legal recourse for marginalized women. Another key piece of legislation is the Anti Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011 which protects women and girls from various forms of Gender Based Violence.

- **Women and girls with disabilities**

The State Party enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act, No.6 of 2012, which provides for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. The Act further provides for skills training and economic opportunities for women with disabilities. The State Party developed the National Disability Policy to provide guidance to mainstreaming disability in National Development. The Policy also paves way for legal reforms that will enhance realization of rights of persons with disabilities and create an enabling environment that takes into consideration their needs. Additionally, the State Party is supporting persons with disabilities to improve their agricultural productivity and livelihoods through the Food Security Packs (FSP).

The State Party has encouraged Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) initiatives with organizations to provide legal aid, counselling, and advocacy services for marginalized women and girls facing discrimination. Additionally, CSOs have undertaken advocacy for increased budgetary allocations for programmes that specifically address the needs of marginalized women and girls.

4. How has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls

The State Party has been affected by the confluence of several crises, namely; economic crisis, HIV and AIDS, and COVID-19 pandemics as well as climate change. These crises disrupted trade, reduced foreign investment and put further strain on public financing.

- **Covid-19 and other pandemics**

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic impacted all areas of development including gender issues such as Gender Based Violence. This had adverse effects on the way people lived their lives. The social consequences of the pandemic were the risk of reversing the gains that the State Party had made in attaining Gender equality. The economic sectors that were worst hit by the pandemic were those with a high representation of women, sectors with high levels of informal jobs mainly occupied by women, worsening their level of vulnerability. Further, women were highly exposed to the pandemic as they made up the majority of frontline health workers and were also the majority primary care givers attending to the sick in homes. To help the poorest households to cope with the effects of the pandemic a Covid-19 emergency cash transfer (ECT) was introduced. In addition, the State Party, besides the existing social cash transfers, introduced economic stimulus packages to support businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic among other responses.

- **Climate crisis**

The agricultural sector of the State Party has suffered droughts the most severe being the 2023/2024 season, which led to food shortages and higher food prices contributing to high inflation. Economic downturns led to reduced national budgets, impacting funding for critical programmes addressing gender equality and women's empowerment. This further, limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women and girls.

The State Party implemented measures such as the emergency Social Cash Transfers (SCT) which aims at cushioning female-headed households faced with shocks caused by various disasters. Additionally, the State Party has continued to implement the regular SCT which aims at contributing to income and improving the health, education and food security outcomes as well as livelihoods for female-headed households.

To mitigate the impact of climate change, the State Party in collaboration with CSOs work with women farmers in adopting climate-smart agriculture. Further, through the Farmer Input Support Programmes (FISP), is providing farming inputs to 1,024, 434 farmers in various climatic regions including women. The State Party has also been implementing the Livelihoods and Empowerment Support Scheme (LESS) which includes the Food Security Pack (FSP) and women empowerment programmes. The FSP, an agricultural programme supports poor and vulnerable but viable female farmer households with agricultural inputs and livelihood skills to improve their productivity, nutrition, food security and income for self- sustainability. The programme supports female-headed households who have access to land but are not in gainful employment.

The State Party is providing farming inputs to famers including rural women to engage in rain-fed, winter and wetland agricultural activities as well as alternative livelihoods.

5. Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls through laws, policies and/or programmes

The State Party has made strides towards gender equality, but significant gaps remain. Some key priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls through laws, policies, and

programmes include addressing GBV, promoting economic empowerment, prioritizing girl child education, increasing women's participation in politics and decision making. The State Party through the National Gender Policy 2023, has the above listed and identified as priorities

- **Eliminating violence against women and girls**

In an effort to addressing GBV, the State Party has strengthened enforcement of the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011. This has been done through the revision of the Act to amend it in order to improving access to justice, witness protection, and efficient prosecution of perpetrators. The State Party has scaled up GBV prevention programmes through public awareness campaigns, education on healthy relationships, and economic empowerment initiatives to reduce vulnerability. The State Party has realised that there is a limited number of shelters for survivors of GBV and is working on measures to increase investments in shelters. Additionally, through One Stop Centres service such as health, counselling, law enforcement and legal aid are being provided. Collaboration with NGOs, civil society, and international organizations has enhanced these efforts, ensuring sustained progress and comprehensive support for eliminating violence against women and girls in Zambia.

- **Quality education training and lifelong learning for women and girls**

The Education Act No. 23 of 2011 seeks to regulate the provision of accessible, equitable and quality education. The Act emphasizes gender equality in education, ensuring equal access to quality education for girls. Further, the Education for All Policy introduced in January 2022 aims at providing user, examination and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fee free education at Secondary level, in addition to the free primary education Policy that started in 2002. The State Party has been implementing the Re-entry Policy which allows school girls who get pregnant to go back to school after pregnancy. Additionally, through the Keeping girls in school component of the GEWEL project is supporting girls from vulnerable households to access education.

- **Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**

The State Party wishes to report that the Constitution Amendment No 2 of 2016 and the Anti Gender Based Violence Act No 1 of 2011 provide strong legal foundations to ensure equal rights and protections for women and girls, explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on sex. National policies such as the National Gender Policy 2023 support these legal frameworks by promoting gender equality across all sectors. Efforts to enhance access to justice include the establishment of 10 GBV Fast Track Courts in all 10 provinces, free legal aid services through the National Prosecutions Authority and The National Legal aid clinic for Women, and training for law enforcement and judicial personnel to handle cases with sensitivity and fairness. By prioritizing equality, non-discrimination and access to justice, the State Party is committed to creating an inclusive society where women and girls can achieve their full potential.

- **Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises**

The State Party developed the National Gender Policy 2023 and the Revised Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Policy 2023 which aim to create an enabling

environment for women entrepreneurs. Specifically, the national Gender Policy will facilitate equal access to entrepreneurial opportunities; strengthen market linkages for women entrepreneurs; and enhance business skills for women entrepreneurs. Programs such as the Women's Empowerment Fund and various capacity-building workshops provide essential financial support and entrepreneurial training, equipping women with the skills needed to start and grow their businesses.

The State Party has prioritised the empowerment of women through promotion of financial inclusion. These programmes include access to loans, savings accounts, and mobile money for women to start businesses and build financial security. One of the innovations to promote financial inclusion for rural women has been village banking. Through the Supporting Women's Livelihood programmes under the GEWEL Project, women are provided with training and resources to equip women with skills and resources for successful businesses.

- **Political participation and representation**

Increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making is one of the State Party's priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls. the gender equity and equality Act No 22 of 2015 has put in place provisions that aim to facilitate women's participate in decision making. Further, the National Gender Policy 2023 has provided measures that aim to increase the participation of women in governance and decision-making. the State Party continues to encourage political parties to adopt women candidates and provide resources for their campaign. This has also been done through providing training and resources for women candidates to compete effectively in elections.

SECTION THREE: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Critical areas of concern:

Women and poverty

Women and the economy

Human rights of women

The girl child

6. Actions taken in the last five years in relation to advance gender equality in the world of work

The last five years, the State Party has made concerted efforts to advance Gender Equality in the world of work, including addressing informal and non-standard employment as well as promoting entrepreneurship among women and Girls.

- **Strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation**

The Constitution (Amendment) Act, No. 2 of 2016, Article 1 provides for the affirmation of the principle of constitution supremacy and invalidates law or conduct that is inconsistent with the Constitution to the extent of the inconsistency. This provides that no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either in itself or in its application to members of a particular race, tribe or system of customary law. Further, the Constitution provided for, merit as the basis of appointment and promotion as well as adequate and equal opportunities for appointment, training and advancement of members of both women and girls

Article 266 provides for the new definition of discrimination which included directly or indirectly treating a person differently on the basis of the person's birth, race, sex, origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, tribe, pregnancy, health, marital, ethnic, social and economic status.

Further the Gender Equity and Equality Act, No. 22 of 2015, Section 24 provides for equal representation and participation of both sexes in decision making by formulation and implementing policies, strategies and programmes. The Act further provides for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in public and political life and elimination of discrimination in economic and social life. The Act mandates equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in employment and entrepreneurship.

The State Party has provided enabling legal framework in relation to employment and labour, which include provisions for both maternity and paternity leave, nursing breaks and minimum wage.

The State Party has put measures making sure that salaries are not based on sex of the individual but qualifications and position held and therefore, on the basis of the criteria both women and men are treated the same. To this effect the State Party revised the minimum wages and conditions of employment through the issuance of Statutory Instruments Numbers 69 of 2018 for Domestic Workers, 70 of 2018 for Shop Workers and 71 of 2018 for the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment (General)(Amendment) Order, 2018 where minimum wage provisions were revised to cover vulnerable groups of employees, both women and men who are not represented by Unions.

Further to 2018 Statutory Instruments, the State Party has revised the minimum wages and conditions of employment through issuance of Statutory Instruments No. 48 (General), 49 (Domestic Workers) and 50 (Shop Workers) of 2023. These revised minimum wages and conditions of employment took effect on 1st January 2024.

- **Introduction/strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies).**

The Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2015 specifically under section 25 and 26 provides for special measures that promote gender equity and equality in education provides for measures that target women in rural and peri urban areas. Further Section 30 of the Act provides for elimination of discrimination in education and vocation guidance. This provision applies to both public and private bodies.

- **Measures taken to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace**

The State Party has put in place a legal framework to outlaw sexual harassment including in the place of work. The Gender Equity and Equality Act, 22 of 2015 contain provisions that prohibit sexual harassment. Further, the Penal Code (Amendment) Act No. 15 of 2005, introduced the offence of sexual harassment and made indecent assault a felony. This Act also provides a custodial minimum sentence of 15 years for rape, statutory rape, defilement and incest. In addition, a number of institutions have put in place sexual harassment prevention and child protection policies, strategies and programmes.

- **Strengthened Land Rights and Tenure Security**

The State Party wishes to report that under the Republican Constitution Article 253(1)(a) provides for equitable access to land and associated resources. Further, Section 27(3)(b) of the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015 enjoins public and private bodies to take appropriate measures to ensure that women have the same rights as men to allocation and acquisition of land and other property. In addition, Section 27(1) of the Gender Equity and Equality Act states that there shall be no discrimination against women in economic and social life. Furthermore, Section 27(2) mandates line ministries responsible for Finance and Commerce to take appropriate measures in the social, economic field, especially in the access to and control of resources by women to ensure the full development and advancement of women on an equal basis with men.

The State Party wishes to report that the National Land Policy (2021) includes specific provisions to enhance women's land rights and tenure security. It advocates for the allocation of land to women and ensures their participation in land governance.

- **Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including self- employed women**

The State Party wishes to report that there is an increase on financial inclusion from 59 percent in 2015 to 80 percent in 2020, with a special emphasis on empowering women who have historically been underserved by financial institutions. Further, the report highlights actions that has enhanced financial inclusion for women such as promotion on the use of mobile banking and other digital financial services that have seen coverage of women even in rural and remote areas.

Furthermore, the State Party continued collaboration with banks and microfinance institutions to create financial products specifically designed for women. These products often feature lower minimum deposit requirements, flexible repayment terms, and reduced collateral requirements.

The State Party wishes to report that the current legal framework provided in the republican constitution under articles 187-188 on the right to pension do not discriminate and applies equally to both male and female. Similarly, the National Pensions Scheme Amendment Act No.1 of 2023, National Health Insurance Act No. 2 of 2018, Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Act No. 52 of 1970 and Public Service Pension Fund Act No. 35 of 1996 provides for the benefits for the members and the survivor in the case of death of a principal member in a non-discriminatory manner.

The State Party further wishes to report that it has through Amendment Act No. 1 of 2023 provided for the partial withdraw of pension to provide for financial relief for individuals facing financial economic hardships as a safety net to help them meet their immediate financial obligations. This move has also provided sustainable benefits to the women in need with 64,898 females benefiting as at November, 2023.

- **Improved access to markets and business development (incl. Climate-smart technologies), infrastructure**

The State Party has enhanced women's participation in commerce and trade by putting in place some of the following measures; building capacities of women in entrepreneurship and providing financial literacy skills and economic empowerment. It has also designed tailor-made women business skills trainings, provided women start-up capital through grants and loans, as well as capital equipment.

The State Party wishes to report that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) increased from 1.6 million kwacha in 2021, 25.7 Million Kwacha in 2022 to 30.6 Million Kwacha per constituency in 2024, with the provision of 20 percent allocation to women and youth empowerment. This increment in the fund is meant to empower women at community level and to take-up ownership of developing their communities. Furthermore, the Citizen Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) has established various empowerment programmes

specifically targeting women entrepreneurs. These programmes provide low-interest loans as low as 12 percent to help women start and grow their businesses.

The State Party wishes to report that under Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) a 30 percent target towards women has been set in terms of social distribution for females aged 35 years and above to access finance through empowerment initiatives and programmes. Further 10 percent of empowerment resources are given to youths (females and males between the ages of 18 to 35) with an additional 5 percent for persons with disabilities.

- **Transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment**

The State Party wishes to report that National Employment and Labour Market Policy (NELMP) aims to create a conducive environment for transitioning workers from the informal to the formal economy with a specific focus on women and girls. Legal Framework has been strengthened to protect the rights of workers in the informal sector. This includes extending labour rights and social protection to informal workers such as minimum wage regulations and occupational health and safety standards. The formalization incentives have been introduced for informal businesses such as tax breaks, simplified registration processes and access to business development services.

Furthermore, the State Party has expanded social security coverage to include informal workers. The National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) has developed schemes tailored to the needs of informal workers, allowing them to contribute voluntarily and benefit from pension plans and other social security measures. The State Party has also introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) that covers informal workers, ensuring they have access to healthcare services that include women. The State Party reports that 10,000 cash transfer beneficiaries have registered under NHIS of which the majority are women. The Patents and Companies Registration Agency (PACRA) has simplified the business registration process, including the introduction of an online registration system. This has made it easier and more affordable for women in the informal sector to register their businesses.

7. Action taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers.

- **Expanded support for older persons, persons with disabilities and others needing intense forms of care.**

The State Party has been implementing various basic social protection programmes to ensure that the most vulnerable including the elderly in society are not left behind in the development agenda. Some of the programmes implemented include the Social Cash Transfer Scheme, Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS) and Reintegration and Alternative Care Services for children in need of care especially girls. The SCT targets those in destitution and incapacitated households which are headed by females and children, the chronically ill and on palliative care, the older persons and persons with disabilities. The State Party has continued to increase allocations to the social sectors in order to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of

especially the most vulnerable citizens. Of the total National Budget, the allocation to the social sector had increased to 30.5% in 2023 from 23.5% in 2022. This has led to the scaling up of implementation of programmes such as the Social Cash Transfer and Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS) where the majority of the beneficiaries are women and girls

The SCT contributes to household income and improving the health, education and food security outcomes as well as livelihoods. Over the years, there have been more female beneficiaries compared to the male. In addition, through the PWAS, in-kind support has been provided to the most vulnerable when they are faced with emergencies. Further the State Party has provided shelter for older persons in need and places of safety for GBV victims, victims of human trafficking and stranded persons. The State Party also provides a resettlement scheme for persons with disabilities.

- **Introduction or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave**

The State Party, in line with its Eighth National Development Plan, is implementing the Decent Work Country Programmes. This is aimed at ensuring that all workers have decent employment that guarantees them social protection and protects their rights at places of work. This is being done through intensified labour inspections to ensure compliance with the labour laws and the protection of workers' rights.

The State Party has strengthened the implementation of the provisions in the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015 that provides that “an employer shall not discriminate against a woman by dismissing or demoting the woman on the basis of sex, marriage, disability, pregnancy or maternity leave or subject the woman to any other disadvantage in employment”. Further the Employment Act No.3 of 2019 provides for women are to be granted maternity leave with pay, mother's day and comparable social benefits without loss of employment, seniority or social allowances. The code has also increased the paternity leave days from five days to ten continues working days. This helps parents balance work and family responsibilities. Further, National Social Protection Policy supports a balanced work-life by promoting home and family support especially for women and contributes to enhanced social security measures.

In addition, the State Party is promoting appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices which include early initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of life, exclusive breastfeeding in the first six (6) months of life, continued breastfeeding up to age 2 or beyond, introduction of a range of safe solid and semisolid foods at the age of 6 months, and gradual increases in the amount of food given and frequency of feeding as the child gets older. The 2018 Zambia Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS) showed that the three nutritional status indices (stunting, wasting, and underweight) had improved in the last 5 years. In the period under review, stunting decreased from 40 percent to 35 percent, wasting decreased from 6 percent to 4 percent, and the proportion of underweight children decreased from 15 percent to 12 percent.

8. Actions taken to reduce the gender digital divide

- **Mainstreamed gender perspective in the national digital policies**

The State Party has implemented several initiatives to reduce the gender digital divide, focusing on increasing access to digital technologies, promoting digital literacy among women and girls, and fostering an inclusive digital economy.

The State Party has developed and implemented a National ICT Policy that emphasizes gender equality and women's involvement in technology. The policy aims to provide equitable access to ICT resources for all citizens, with specific focus on women and girls. Further, the Eighth National Development plan (8NDP) includes specific targets and strategies for reducing the Gender Digital Divide, recognizing the role of ICT in achieving gender equality and women's involvement in technology.

- **Taken measures to remove discriminatory barriers faced by women and girls to access use and design digital tools**

The State Party is striving to bridge the urban-rural digital divide by investing in and expanding ICT infrastructure in rural areas. This includes setting up community ICT Hub centres that provide internet access and digital services to women in underserved communities. These efforts have been made to lower the cost of internet access and ICT devices. Telecommunication companies have launched initiatives aimed at increasing digital inclusion among women. These initiatives often focus on providing digital literacy training, supporting women entrepreneurs with digital tools, and offering mentorship programmes. Non-governmental organizations have partnered with the government to deliver ICT training and awareness programmes targeting women and girls.

- **Taken measures to promote gender responsive STEM education**

The State Party has implemented policies to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education among girls. Scholarships and incentives are provided to encourage more girls to pursue studies and careers in ICT-related fields. ICT education has been integrated into the national curriculum at various levels of schooling, ensuring that all students, including girls, gain basic digital literacy from an early age.

9. Macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment that affected the implementation of the BPfA and macro-economic policies implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy.

The state party through the National Gender Policy of 2023, has prioritised Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting to integrate gender equality objectives into fiscal policy and administration, ensuring that budgetary decisions promote gender equality and address gender disparities. In addition to this the State Party has developed Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRP) Guidelines to ensure that all Ministries, Provinces and Spending Agencies (MPSAs) integrate gender into their budgeting processes to promote gender equity and equality.

The State Party has promoted microfinance schemes and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to empower women economically. Programmes that empower women under the Citizen Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) offer loans and grants to women entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses. These initiatives have increased women's access to credit and financial services, fostering economic independence and reducing poverty.

The State Party recognises that a significant portion of women work in agriculture, the government has introduced policies to support women farmers. These include providing access to land, agricultural inputs, and training. Programmes like the Farmer Input Support Programmes (FISP) have been designed to ensure that women farmers receive agricultural inputs to enhance productivity and food security.

The State Party has implemented tax incentives and exemptions to support women-owned businesses and reduce the tax burden on low-income families, where women are often the primary earners. These measures help to increase disposable income for women and promote investment in women's economic activities.

The State Party has invested in education and vocational training for women and girls to enhance their skills and employability. Policies aimed at increasing girls' enrolment and retention in schools, such as bursaries and scholarships, are part of initiatives. The Keeping Girls in School Component of the GEWEL programmes and the CDF provide bursaries to girls in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes.

The State Party wishes to report that there are various programmes aimed at providing clean water and sanitation. These includes the National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation programmes (2011 – 2030). Furthermore, the State Party is rolling out “Keep Zambia Clean Campaign” across the country through the District Water, Sanitation and Health Education (D – WASHE) committees.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Critical areas of concern

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of Women
- C. Women and Health
- I. Human rights of Women
- J. The girl child

10. Actions taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls

- **Promoted poor women’s access to decent work through active labour market policies and target measures**

The State Party is implementing several labour market policies aimed at promoting employment, protecting workers' rights and ensuring decent working conditions. The State Party is executing the Decent Work Country programmes, designed to ensure that all workers have decent employment, guaranteeing social protection and safeguarding their workplace rights. This initiative includes intensified labour inspections to ensure compliance with labour laws and the protection of workers' rights.

- **Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services**

The State Party has developed the National Land Policy 2019 to ensure equal rights for women to own, inherit, and manage land, supported by awareness campaigns to educate communities about these rights. The National Lands Policy was launched in 2019 to promote equitable access to land on both statutory and customary land. The Policy has provided for allocation of 50 percent of available land for alienation to women.

The State Party has made significant strides with regards to access to finance. This has been driven by comprehensive national strategies and collaborative efforts among the government, private sector, and international development partners. Ongoing initiatives and public private partnerships are fostering an environment where tailored financial products and technological advancements are paving the way for more inclusive economic growth.

Further, the State Party launched the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028. The launch of the strategy demonstrated the State Party’s commitment to achieving an inclusive and robust financial ecosystem. This strategy focuses on expanding access to affordable financial services for individuals and businesses.

The State Party is also in the process of implementing the Comprehensive Agriculture Transformation Support Programmes (CATSP) which is aimed at increasing job opportunities for women, youth and person with disabilities among five other expected results. The expected results are envisioned to be achieved through the development and dissemination of smart agricultural practices and other technologies for crops, livestock and aquaculture. This is amongst eleven other sub-programmes and investment areas outlined in the CATSP.

Further, the State Party is implementing the Food Security Programme (FSP) where female headed households are targeted and provided with farming inputs, poultry and livestock. In the 2022/2023 farming season, 242,000 households benefited of which 63 percent were female-headed households.

- **Supported women’s entrepreneurship, access to markets and business development activities**

The State Party is implementing a number of interventions to support women’s entrepreneurship and business development. The state party is implementing the Girls Education and Women Empowerment and Livelihoods (GEWEL) Project aimed at empowering women in the productive age group (19-64 years) identified from extremely poor households in rural districts with entrepreneurship skills and start-up capital. Other components of the programme include life skills, mentorship, reproductive knowledge, savings and peer support. Supporting Women’s Livelihoods (SWL) is implemented in 81 of Zambia’s 116 districts and has benefited nearly 117,000 poor rural women since 2016. Some of the programme impacts include increased household agricultural income, business profits, savings, consumption and increased value of household assets. Currently, the programme has focused on strengthening linkages to markets, value chains, finance, financial inclusion and nutrition as well as expanding livelihood programming.

The State Party wishes to report that it has been promoting the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises through the provision of empowerment funds and grants with the aim of creating an enabling environment for the SMEs. These empowerment funds and grants are provided to ensure growth of SMEs in various sectors. In this regard, 2,216 women were provided with small loans and 38,420 women were awarded with the Marketeer Booster loans in the year 2023. 20,109 youths were awarded with different kinds of grants/loans for businesses. In order to foster Co-operative development, 37 percent of registered Co-operatives were women and 48 percent were youths while 3 percent were the persons with disabilities in the period January to December 2023.

The State Party launched an e-commerce platform in 2020 as part of the 50 Million African Women Speak (50 MAWS) Project which was launched in 2018. The Project is anchored under the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The platform is accessible at www.womenconnect.org and it is also available as an application on the Google Play and Apple Stores. The platform is intended to empower millions of women in Africa to start, grow, and scale up businesses by providing a one-stop shop for their specific information needs. Further, the platform is meant for women and youth entrepreneurs, connecting them with other entrepreneurs in 38 African Countries under Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East Africa Communities (EAC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). As at July 2024 the State Party had a total of 26,307 registered users on the platform.

- **Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls**

The State Party has been implementing and scaling up social protection programmes for women and girls (19-64) identified from extremely poor households to reduce poverty and vulnerability in society. The programmes being implemented include the Social Cash Transfer Scheme, Supporting Women Livelihoods and the Food Security Pack. Over the years, the

Social Cash Transfer programme has significantly expanded in coverage and transfer value ensuring more than 50 percent of beneficiary households were female headed. In 2020, the total household beneficiaries were 616,464 out of which 66 percent were female headed households. In 2021, the total number of beneficiary households increased to 973,323 out of which 58 percent were female beneficiaries and out of 1,027,000 beneficiaries in 2022, 62 percent were female headed household. In 2023, the SCT coverage increased to 1,101,998 households out of which 66 percent were female households and the 2024 caseload of 1,311,101 has 77 percent female headed beneficiary households.

Further, the State Party is implementing the Food Security Pack programme to support poor and vulnerable but viable farmers with various inputs to increase agricultural activities and promote income, food and nutrition security at household level. The programme also aims at supporting community food banks, management and marketing hubs. During the 2022/2023 farming season, a total of 242,000 households benefited from the programme of which 63 percent were females and 37 percent were males.

Allocations to the social sectors have continued to increase in order to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of especially the most vulnerable citizens. Of the total National Budget, the allocation to the social sector had increased to 30.5 percent in 2023 from 23.5 percent in 2022.

The State Party has also increased the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from 25.7 Million Kwacha in 2022 to 28.3 Million Kwacha per constituency in 2023, with the provision of 10 percent each allocated to women and youth empowerment. This allocation in the fund is meant to empower women at community level and to take-up ownership of developing their communities.

- **Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

The State Party has put in place various measures to increase access to legal services among women and the poor. The measures include Amendment of the Legal Aid Act No.1 of 2021 to provide for the granting of legal aid in civil and criminal cases to persons whose means are insufficient to enable them pay for legal services; Establishment of Gender Based Violence Fast Track Courts ; removal of fees for medical and police reports for GBV Survivors; Training of community paralegals to increase access to justice and provision of legal aid service to GBV survivors; and establishment of the GBV specialised unit under National Prosecution Authority (NPA) to enhance GBV prosecutions services. In addition, the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) has decentralized its services to all the Provinces and 53 districts to ensure access to justice. Further, provision of legal aid services for women by the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) under the National Legal Aid Clinic for Women is free of charge. In addition, a witness fund in GBV cases has been established under the NPA to assist witnesses to attend court proceedings when required. The Paralegal policy has been put in place to formalize and guide the operations of the paralegals which has improved access to legal services.

11. Actions taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls

- **Introduced or strengthened social protection for families with children that prioritise women as recipients**

The State Party has been implementing social protection programmes for unemployed women to ensure that they are not left behind. The programmes include Social Cash Transfer Scheme, Public Welfare Assistance Scheme and the Food Security Pack. Under the Social Cash Transfer Scheme, the number of beneficiary households has increased from 973,332 in 2021 to 1,101,998 in 2023. Of the total beneficiaries in 2023, 66 percent were female. The targeted beneficiaries of the scheme include child headed households, the chronically ill, persons with disabilities and the aged. In addition, agricultural inputs were being provided to vulnerable but viable farming households.

- **Extended social protection to women in informal employment**

The Social Cash Transfer (STCs) programme is one of the non- contributory schemes based on social assistance in form of cash stipend increased from K300 per month for persons with disability and K150 for the other beneficiaries in 2021 to K400 and K200 in 2023 respectively. Additionally, an extra K200 is being paid monthly for the year 2024 as a cushion to mitigate the impacts of the drought. The Social Cash Transfer Scheme is designed to supplement household incomes. The Food Security Pack (FSP) programme is another non- contributory programme. This programme is in line with SDG Goal 2 which appeals to the nation to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. In this regard, 242,000 households benefited in the 2022/2023 farming season, of which 63 percent were females.

- **Introduced or strengthened social protection for women of working age eg unemployment benefits public works programmes social assistance)**

The State Party has put in place social protection schemes that aim to strengthen social protection for women of working age and improve their overall economic security. The Social Cash Transfer (SCT) program targets vulnerable households, including those headed by women. This program provides regular cash payments to help meet basic needs and reduce poverty. It has been particularly beneficial for women who are unemployed or underemployed, offering them financial stability and enabling them to invest in income-generating activities. The State Party has increased allocations to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from k1,600,000 in 2021 to K28, 300,000 in 2023. Of the total CDF allocation, 10 percent is allocated towards economic empowerment of women through cooperatives, associations and clubs. Initiatives like the Women's Empowerment Fund provide financial support and training for women entrepreneurs. These programs help women start and grow their own businesses, enhancing their economic independence and resilience against unemployment.

12. Actions taken in the five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in the country

- **Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services**

The State Party has made significant strides in promoting women's access to health services by expanding universal health coverage and enhancing public health services. In this regard, the State Party launched the National Health Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026) whose main objective is towards attainment of quality universal health coverage through decentralisation. Further, the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has played a fundamental role in ensuring that women, particularly those in underserved rural and informal sectors, receive essential health services without financial strain. Services such as maternal and child health have been prioritized by increasing the availability of family planning services, antenatal and postnatal care, and comprehensive maternal health services across the country. Additionally, public health initiatives focusing on HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and treatment have been intensified, providing women with vital knowledge and access to necessary healthcare. By improving healthcare infrastructure, ensuring the supply of essential medicines, and implementing targeted health programmes, the State Party is actively working to eliminate barriers to healthcare for women and promote their overall health and well-being.

- **Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services.**

The State Party is implementing specific health programmes that are targeting women and girls. The programmes include among others, increased Reproductive Health Services (RHS), adolescent friendly health services, early childhood mortality maternal care services, child health, nutrition of children and women, HIV and AIDs awareness as well as knowledge and behaviour change services.

The State Party is implementing comprehensive family planning programmes, making contraceptives widely available and accessible, and providing education on reproductive health to empower women and girls to make informed choices. This in line with the Family Planning Implementation Plan 2022-2024 developed to implement strategies to increase family planning service providers in long-acting reversible contraceptives and family planning service providers in the community.

The State Party wishes to report that it developed and launched the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026 to guide implementation of the adolescent health program. To that effect, the State has established 303 stand-alone adolescent health spaces at various health centres across the country, while 1,719 are shared spaces. Further, the State Party has undertaken the construction of youth resource centres in each district for the provision of skills training to the never been to school, dropped out of school and have been to school youths. There is a total of 23 youth resources centres with youth friendly spaces where the youth can access health education and information on health services including reproductive, gender-based violence, HIV/STIs, alcohol and substance use and mental health. In addition, the State Party has undertaken training programmes for health care providers and peer educators in adolescent friendly reproductive health services in districts, as well as Life Skills and Health Education (L-SHE) to both in and out of school adolescents and young people. A platform for multi-sectoral coordination called the Adolescent health technical working group is also in place to provide policy direction and guiding partners implementing adolescent and youth programs.

Interventions aimed at promoting maternal and child health, reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality and morbidity in line with SDGs and the National Health Strategy are being implemented. Despite these efforts, there are still gaps in access and availability of quality health services especially for children and women in rural areas. The 2018 ZDHS Report indicated that Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) reduced drastically from 398 in 2014 to 252 in 2018, infant mortality stood at 42 deaths per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality rate stood at 61 deaths per 1,000 live births. Further, the neonatal mortality rate stood at 27 per 1,000 deaths. Assistance at delivery by skilled provider was far higher in urban (93 percent) than rural (73 percent) areas, when only 67 percent of births took place in the health facility. There was variation in percentage of facility deliveries in urban than rural areas 93 percent compared with 79 percent, respectively

HIV and Aids prevalence among adults has not changed over the last decade despite decreasing infection rates. Prevalence of HIV among adults ages 15 to 59 years is 12.3 percent: 14.9 percent among females and 9.5 percent among males. The State Party has developed the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework (NASF) 2023 – 2027. The framework is aligned to the Vision 2030, Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), National HIV and AIDS Policy, as well as international and regional commitments. The NASF 2023-2027 takes HIV and AIDS epidemic as a social developmental challenge and targets the 95-95-95 target by 2025 and the Vision 2030. The State Party is among the 5 countries in Africa to start giving injectable Anti-Retroviral (ARVs) for prevention. The State Party wishes to report that people living with HIV accounted for 1,400,000 in 2021 of which 1,240,261 were on ARVs, PMTCT coverage was at 91.3 percent.

The State Party is promoting the Test and Treat Initiative in which the infected are immediately put on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). Further, all health facilities are implementing the prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT). These interventions have made it easier for women to access diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mother to child transmission.

The State Party recognized that mental health problems and mental disorders are major disease burden within the community. The State Party has enacted the Mental Health Act No. 6 of 2019 which aims at expanding preventive, promotion, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative mental health services, including reduction of stigma. A special day has also been set aside for people living with autism as one way of giving it special attention. To address mental issues related to alcoholism, an Alcohol Policy and Implementation Plan have provided some measures.

- **Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/ health promotion campaigns**

The State Party has implemented programmes to sensitize the public on the availability of gender responsive health services and at the same time build the capacity in health workers on how to provide such services. For example, there is a programme to encourage partners to seek reproductive, mental, maternal, child and adolescent health services such as giving preferential attention to women who come for antenatal services with their spouses, and males who take their children for child health services.

13. Actions taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls in the last five years

- **Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of primary and secondary education**

The State Party has introduced early childhood education as part of the mainstream education system while in the past it was mainly provided by the private sector. Further, the State Party has constructed model Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres, hired ECE teachers and developed curriculum. Further, the State Party in January 2022 introduced the “education for all” policy that provides for free education for primary and secondary school education. This has helped eliminate the barriers to access education which most girls were facing related to economic reasons.

The State Party is implementing the Keeping Girls in School (KGS) in 65 Districts of the country. Since inception in 2016, a total number of 140,000 girls from poor and vulnerable households from the social cash transfer scheme are being supported through payment of education grant, boarding fees, weekly boarding fees, tuition and examination fees for General Certificate of Education (GCE) and external candidates, provision of sanitary towels and has supported over 800 girls with tertiary education. Additionally, the State Party through the Ministry of Education has a budget line for Orphan, vulnerable Children (OVCs) in schools. In 2020, out of total of 153,737 bursaries, 98,365 bursaries were allocated to girls, representing 64 percent. In addition, 94,075 Girls were enrolled under Keeping Girls in School (KGS) by 2023. The gender parity index improved from 0.99 in 2015 to 1.03 in 2020 for primary school, while the gender parity index for secondary school improved from 0.84 in 2015 to 0.94 in 2020.

The Re-entry Policy introduced in 1997 continued to be implemented. The policy allows girls that fall pregnant whilst at school to go back to school after weaning the child. The records show an improvement in the readmission of the girl child coming back into school after giving birth, from 50 percent in 2017 and 54 percent in 2018 to 59 percent in 2019 while dropping to 48 percent in 2020. However, the readmission trajectory dropping in 2020 was attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic

Further, one of the measures put in place to ensure consistency in school attendance by adolescents' girls was the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) programme of 2016. The programme aims at galvanizing support for the provision of appropriate infrastructure, materials, and training for adolescent female learners to attend school. This is addressed by providing appropriate bathrooms, support services and sanitary towels to girls to promote their participation in school at all times. Due to poor sanitary conditions in most schools, many girls tend to be absent 3-5 days every month whenever they are menstruating hence the need for menstrual hygiene facilities

- **Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes**

In addition, the State Party has invested in education and vocational training for women and girls to enhance their skills and employability. Policies aimed at increasing girls' enrolment and retention in schools, such as bursaries and scholarships, are part of initiatives. The Keeping Girls in School Component of the GEWEL programmes and the CDF provide bursaries to girls in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes.

14. Actions taken to ensure that economic recovery from the covid-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated

The State Party introduced economic stimulus packages aimed at supporting sectors where women are predominantly employed, such as agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and informal businesses. Further, allocations to Social Protection significantly increased in 2021. Key social protection programme such as the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) and Food Security Pack (FSP) received a significant increase in budgetary allocations of 128 percent and 801 percent respectively. In nominal terms, the allocation to SCT increased from K 1 billion to K 2.3 billion while the allocation to the FSP increased from K 112 million to K 1 billion. This resulted in an increase in the beneficiaries targeted for each programme for 2021.

Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

Critical areas of concern:

Violence against women

Human rights of women

Women and the media

The girl child

15. Forms of gender-based violence and specific contexts or settings prioritized for action

- **Intimate partner violence/domestic violence**

Domestic violence is the most common prevalent of the form of Gender Based Violence. About 43% of women in Zambia have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.

- **Gender-Based Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology**

Gender Based Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology is an emerging issue of serious concern in the State Party. This form of violence includes cyberbullying, online harassment, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, which often lead to severe psychological trauma and social stigmatization. Perpetrators often exploit the anonymity and reach of digital platforms to target women and girls, making it difficult for victims to seek help and for authorities to hold offenders accountable. Strengthening legal

frameworks, enhancing law enforcement capabilities, and promoting responsible digital behaviour are essential steps to address technology facilitated GBV in Zambia.

- **Gender-Based Violence against women in politics;**

Gender based violence (GBV) against women in politics is a significant barrier to gender equality and effective political participation that the State Party faces. Women in politics often face harassment, intimidation, and violence, both online and offline, aimed at deterring them from participating in political activities. Efforts to address GBV in politics include advocacy campaigns and capacity building programs. Raising awareness about the importance of women's participation in politics are essential steps toward eliminating GBV and empowering women in Zambia's political landscape.

- **Gender-based Violence in the Media**

Gender Based Violence in the media in Zambia is another issue of concern to the State Party. Female journalists and media professionals often face sexual harassment, intimidation, and threats, both within their workplaces and from the public, which hampers their ability to perform their duties and discourages women's participation in the media industry. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and ensuring accountability for violations are critical steps in combating GBV in the Zambian media. In 2020, the State Party launched the novel Media Development Policy which is anchored on four main pillars namely: media freedom, media pluralism, media independence and safety of journalists.

- **Sexual harassment and violence in public places educational setting and work places;**

The State Party wishes to report that sexual harassment remains a challenge that undermines the safety, dignity, and well-being of women and girls. In public places, women often face verbal harassment and other forms of sexual violence, which restrict their freedom of movement and participation in social and economic activities. In educational settings, female students and staff experience sexual harassment and violence from peers, teachers, and other school personnel, which adversely affects their academic performance and mental health, and in some cases, leads to school dropouts. In the workplace, sexual harassment manifests as unwelcome sexual advances, comments, and physical contact, creating a hostile environment that hinders women's professional growth and job satisfaction.

The State Party has put in place legislative and policy frameworks aimed at addressing sexual harassment. The Anti GBV Act No 1 of 2011 and the Gender Equity and Equality Act No 22 of 2015 both prohibit sexual harassment. Further the State Party, in 2022, launched the Are You Safe Campaign that aims to encourage action by all Zambians to ensure women and girls feel safe at work, home and school. Despite legal protections such as the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act and the Employment Act, enforcement is inconsistent, and many cases go unreported due to fear of retaliation, stigma, and lack of trust in the justice system.

- **Child Marriages**

Child marriage is driven by traditional practices and beliefs, low social status assigned to women and girls in society, harmful elements in initiation ceremonies for children who reach puberty, polygamy, poverty, girls' barriers to completing their education and inconsistencies in laws on the minimum age for marriage. Additionally, teenage pregnancy is a driver of child marriage. To address child marriages, Government has enacted the Children's Code Act and amended the Marriage Act to increase the age of a child from 16 to 19 years. It has also been conducting sensitisations through cultural resetting with traditional and community leaders, traditional counsellors, parents and guardians. Despite these interventions, child marriage continues to occur due to negative traditional and cultural norms, practices and beliefs as well as poverty.

16. Actions prioritized to address gender-based violence?

- **Introduced/strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation**

The State Party has enacted the Anti Gender Based Violence Act No 1 of 2011 and the Gender Equity and Equality Act No 22 of 2015 that provide robust legal frameworks to protect women's rights and address Gender Based Violence. The Anti GBV Act is currently under review to improve its effectiveness. The State Party has enacted the Children Code Act No. 12 of 2022, which now prohibits and criminalise child marriage which is a form of GBV. Additionally, the Marriage (Amendment) Act declares child marriages void, regardless of whether they are performed under customary or statutory law. This amendment aligns with the Constitution (Amendment) of Zambia, which defines a child as anyone under the age of 18. The State Party has developed the National Gender Policy of 2023 that provided measures aimed at addressing violence against women and girls.

- **Introduced /strengthened measures to increase women access to justice**

The State Party has established Gender Based Violence Fast Track Courts to provide quick disposal of cases and protection of victims. In this regard, ten fast tracks courts have been established in all the ten Provinces. The Judiciary has put in place deliberate measures to prioritise and expedite the hearing of GBV cases by providing specific training and developing multidisciplinary GBV guidelines on how to handle GBV cases. Further, the State Party through the National Prosecutions Authority and the National Legal Aid Clinic for Women provides free legal services to survivors of Gender Based Violence.

- **Introduced/strengthened services for survivors of violence**

The State Party has continued to establish One Stop Centres that offer comprehensive services to survivors of Gender Based Violence. These services include legal assistance, medical care, law enforcement and psychosocial support, all in one location, making it easier for women to access the help they need. So far the State Party has established 64 One Stop Centres across the Country. Further, the State Party has established shelters for survivors of GBV in need of safety. The State Party launched the Minimum Norms and Standards for Shelters of survivors and those at risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Human Trafficking. The guidelines

are aimed at creating an acceptable procedure of running the shelters across the country. The State Party through has establishes toll free line for survivors of children and adults in need of psycho-social support and referral services. The lines offer counselling on a variety of issues including: Gender Based Violence, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, mental health, and child marriages.

17. Strategies used to prevent gender-based violence?

- **Empowering women and girls to promote their economic independence and access to resources, and promote equitable relations within households, communities and society**

The State Party is implementing a number of interventions to support women's entrepreneurship and business development. The Girls Education and Women Empowerment and Livelihoods (GEWEL) Project aimed at empowering women in the productive age group (19-64 years) identified from extremely poor households in rural districts with entrepreneurship skills and start-up capital. Other components of the programme include life skills, mentorship, reproductive knowledge, savings and peer support. Supporting Women's Livelihoods (SWL) implemented in 81 of the County's 116 districts and has benefited nearly 117,000 poor rural women since 2016. Some of the programme impacts include increased household agricultural income, business profits, savings, consumption and increased value of household assets. Currently, the programme has focused on strengthening linkages to markets, value chains, finance, financial inclusion and nutrition as well as expanding livelihood programming.

Further the Constituency Development Fund has been increased from K1,600,000 in 2021 to K28, 300,000 in 2023. Of the total CDF allocation, 10 percent is allocated towards economic empowerment of women through cooperatives, associations and clubs. Additionally, the State Party continues to support poor and vulnerable women through the social assistance schemes such as the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) to promote and protect their wellbeing

- **Create safe environments including schools, workplaces, and public spaces**

The State Party during the commemoration of the 16 of activism against GBV in 2022, launched the "Are You Safe" Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to encourage action by all to ensure women and girls feel safe at work, home and school. The campaign takes the focus away from a survivor of GBV and instead encourages her friends, family and co-workers to support her to get help. Therefore, the campaign raises awareness on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the workplace, domestic violence and school related Gender Based Violence.

- **Raising public awareness to change attitudes and behaviours**

The State Party participates annually in the commemoration of the International Women's Day and the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. This is commemorated in various ways such as awareness campaign, roadshows, radio and television programmes to the public based on the different topics. This is usually done in line with the domesticated global theme for the year as proposed by the UN Women.

- **Mobilizing community/faith/traditional leaders, politicians, opinion influencers, journalists, or media influencers to influence positive norms**

The State Party through the Gender Division undertakes Cultural resetting programme as a measure to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence (GBV). This is done through a participatory engagement with the traditional leaders, religious leaders, communities as well as the boys and girls. These engagements are conducted through community dialogues and Focus Group Discussions. Among the topics for discussion are the preventive measures and response intervention that the State Party has put in place.

Further, the State Party, in 2021 launched the Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) programme that aims to mentor boys aged 10-14 by engaging them to challenge social and cultural norms that perpetuate GBV. Engagement of boys through the (CBIM) programme is helping to foster long-term transformational norms change while ensuring promotion of gender equality. This evidence-based curriculum promotes respect for women and girls as well as equality between men and women.

18. Actions taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence

- **Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions**

The State Party enacted the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act No.2 of 2021 which provides for the protection of persons against cybercrime, cyber extortion, publication of information, pornography, child solicitation, obscene matters or things, hate speech and harassment using electronic communication.

The State Party has also enacted the Children’s Code Act No.22 of 2022 which endeavours to safeguard children from all forms of violence. This Act serves as a measure to mitigate against offences targeted at children and act as a deterrent to perpetrators.

Further, in 2020, the State Party developed the Child Online Protection Strategy which is premised on legal measures, capacity building and awareness. State Party has also developed the draft National Strategy on Ending Online Gender Based Violence aimed at enhancing existing efforts toward preventing and responding to online Gender Based Violence.

19. Measures taken to resource women’s organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?

The State Party through the relevant government institutions collaborates with all women’s organisations in the Country implementing programmes and activities to mitigate Gender Based Violence. Specifically, the State Party provides human and material resources towards the operations of GBV Shelters located within women’s organisations working to prevent and respond to GBV.

20. Actions taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media

- **Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of nonstereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media, including social media**

The State Party has in place a 2023 National Gender Policy and its Implementation Plan which focus on mainstreaming gender in media institutions and disseminating gender-related information and reporting on the implementation of institutional gender programmes.

Further, the State Party, in 2023 launched the Media Guidelines – for reporting on Gender Based Violence (GBV). The media guidelines provide a framework for best practice and ethical considerations in media coverage on GBV. The guidelines also address privacy, sensitivity, context, safety and the need to ‘do-no-harm’ and offer practical guidance for professionals covering GBV stories.

21. Actions taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls

- **Refugee and Internally displaced women**

The State Party has accorded refugee women, the same protection under the law as any citizen. The perpetrators of violence against such women, are subjected to the ordinary penal laws such as Anti GBV Act No.1 of 2011, the Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2015, Penal Code Chapter 87 of the Laws of Zambia, Criminal Procedure Code Chapter 88 of the Laws of Zambia as well as Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act No. 22 of 2021.

- **Older women and women living in remote and rural areas**

The State Party has enacted the Anti GBV Act No 1 of 2011 that provides for the protection of victims of Gender Based Violence. Further, the National Ageing Policy has put in place measures that safeguard the rights and welfare of older women.

- **Women and girls with disabilities**

The State Party enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act, No.6 of 2012, which provides for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. The State Party developed the National Disability Policy to provide guidance to mainstreaming disability in National Development. The Policy also paves way for legal reforms that will enhance realization of rights of persons with disabilities and create an enabling environment that takes into consideration their needs.

The State Party has encouraged Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) initiatives with organizations to provide legal aid, counselling, and advocacy services for marginalized women and girls facing discrimination. Additionally, CSOs have undertaken advocacy for increased budgetary allocations for programmes that specifically address the needs of marginalized women and girl.

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Critical areas of concern:

Women in power and decision-making

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Human rights of women

22. Actions and measures put in place to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making in the past five years

- **Provided opportunities for capacity building and skills development, such as mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, and/or political campaigning for women candidates, elected or appointed politicians, parliamentary caucuses, and/or gender equality advocates**

The State Party is conducting several trainings and awareness raising programmes to promote girls education so as to enhance their capacity to vie for leadership positions in future.

The non-state actors have also been lobbying political parties to ensure equal representation of women and men in both political parties and elective public positions. These interventions also include capacity development of women and mentorship programmes for prospective women candidates for elective positions.

Through the African Women's Leaders Network (AWLN) launched in 2022, the State Party is putting together structures to mentor and encourage women to aspire for leadership and take up decision making positions country wide. The aim of the AWLN is to harness the wealth of African women's experiences of leadership, building on existing and emerging networks of women leaders and to develop new partnerships to strengthen the capacity of women.

- **Collected and analysed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions**

The State Party has enacted the Gender Equity and Equality Act that places duty on all public bodies to promote gender equity and equality. Further, the Act provides that a woman has on an equal basis with a man, the same rights to be eligible for elections, participation in public decisions making and formulate and implement State policies programmes.

The State Party has made efforts to collect and analyse data on women's political participation, to better understand and address gender disparities in political representation. This data includes the number of women in management positions in the public sector, politics, the judiciary and state-owned enterprises. In this regard, the State Party noted that the percentage of women in parliament increased, from 4 percent in 1991 to 16 percent in 2016 and 15.1 percent in 2021 though still below parity. For the local government Councillors elected in 2021, 8 percent were women and 92 percent were men and only 10 percent of elected Mayors or Council Chairpersons were women. Further, in 2023, the State Party had 71 percent male Directors and 29 percent female Directors in the Civil Service. In 2019, 23.6 percent of Permanent Secretaries were female while 76.4 percent were male while in 2023, 30 percent of Permanent Secretaries were female while 70 percent were male.

Female representation in decision making positions is generally low, however, the State Party had the first female Chief Justice appointed in 2015. After the 2016 General Election, the State party had the first female Vice-President and the first female Deputy Speaker of the National

Assembly. Further, in 2021, the country had the second female to hold the Office of Vice President and the first female Speaker of the National Assembly. Additionally, Among the Judges, 37.5 percent were male and 62.5 were female Judges in 2022.

23. In the past five years, what actions has Zambia taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

- **Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free Wi-Fi hubs, community technology centers)**

In 2020, the State Party launched the novel Media Development Policy which is anchored on four main pillars namely: media freedom, media pluralism, media independence and safety of journalists. In the same year, the Government launched the Communication Policy which provided the framework for the establishment of the access to information legislation. This resulted in the enactment of the first ever Access to Information Law (ATI No.24 of 2023) which provides for the right to access to information and its limitations and procedures for requesting information.

The National Gender Policy 2023 emphasizes the need for women to participate in decision making and governance in the public and private sectors. The policy is also advocating for the strengthening of capacity of women to take up leadership roles and increased participation of women in science and technology.

The State Party has in place the National ICT Policy, whose implementation plan states the need to promote the active participation of women and girls in ICT programmes aiming to bridge the digital gender divide by increasing women's access to ICT tools and resources, enhancing digital literacy among women, and encouraging the participation of women in ICT education and careers.

The Gender Equity and Equality Act, No.22 of 2015, provides a legal basis for promoting gender equality across all sectors, including ICT and media. This Act prohibits gender-based discrimination and mandates equal opportunities for men and women. In addition, the Act supports the implementation of the gender sensitive training and mentoring to enable women participate effectively in decision making in different sectors.

The State Party, is actively involved in promoting gender equality through ICT, by undertaking research on digital gender divide, setting up ICT hubs, implementing initiatives to increase women's access to ICT as well as encouraging ICT institutions to adopt gender sensitive policies. Events such as "Girls in ICT Day", to inspire and empower young women to pursue careers in technology and at the same time it provides mentorship, training and networking opportunities for girls and women interested in ICT.

- **Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis**

The State Party has developed gender sensitive reporting guidelines for media personnel and this involved training of Journalists on how to report gender issues accurately, increasing visibility of women in media as well as ensuring that media content does not perpetuate gender

stereotypes. In addition, the National Broadcasting Corporation, has adopted internal policies to promote gender equality; and this includes guidelines for gender-sensitive reporting and ensuring balanced representation of women in their programming as well as leadership positions.

The State Party has in place an Independent Broadcasting Authority which has also issued guidelines to media houses on the importance of gender balance in their operations. Media houses are being encouraged to adopt gender sensitive policies and increase the representation of women in media content and leadership.

24. National women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and measures taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.

- **Entity ascribed directly to the Head of the Executive or entity whose head directly reports to the head of the Executive**

The State Party elevated the placement of the government gender machinery into the Office of the President as a Division, in Cabinet Office with the President taking the role of the Minister and deputized by a Permanent Secretary. The Gender Division was established in 2021 following the realignment of Government Ministries, Provinces and Spending Agencies (MPSAs) by His Excellency, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia during the Official Opening of the 13th Session of the National Assembly.

The mandate of the Gender Division is outlined in the Government Gazette Notice No. 1123 of 2021 and the statutory function of the Gender Division is to promote gender equity and equality. The specific Portfolio Functions of the Gender Division are Coordinating and Monitoring the implementation of the following; Gender; Gender Based Violence (GBV); Gender Equity and Equality; National Gender Policy; and Women Economic Empowerment.

The Gender Division has created a department responsible for Gender Rights Protection (GRP), coordination of the development, implementation and review of gender advocacy programmes to facilitate the promotion and protection of gender rights. In addition, this department is also responsible for monitoring compliance to national, regional and international instruments on women's rights. The department coordinates the implementation of the provisions of the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act, No.1 of 2011 and the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015. Under the Gender in Development department, the Division is responsible for facilitating gender mainstreaming through gender analysis and gender auditing of private and public institutions and women economic empowerment responsible for uplifting the social economic wellbeing of vulnerable women and girls through skills development, entrepreneurship training and provision of grants and/or equipment.

25. Mechanisms and tools used to mainstream gender equality across sectors

The State Party has employed a variety of mechanisms and tools to mainstream gender equality across sectors, ensuring that gender perspectives are integrated into policies, programmes, and practices at all levels of governance. In the Executive, is where the Gender Division is situated and specifically tasked with promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as well as coordinating gender mainstreaming across all line ministries and beyond.

The State Party has appointed Gender Focal Points (GFP) in line Ministries who are responsible for ensuring that gender issues are addressed within their respective sectors. These focal points work closely with the Gender Division to implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes. The State Party has appointed Gender Focal Points in judicial institutions, who ensure that gender considerations are integrated into the judicial system, including the training of judges and court personnel.

In the Legislature, a Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Affairs is in place to oversee the implementation of gender policies and legislation. This committee ensures that gender considerations are incorporated into all legislative processes and debates.

The Gender Division coordinates different government line ministries, department and agencies to promote gender equality and ensure that gender issues are consistently addressed across all sectors of government. The State Party through the Gender Division also conducts gender audits in line ministries to assess the extent to which gender perspectives have been mainstreamed into sector policies, programmes as well as budgets. These audits help institutions to identify areas for improvement and to develop gender-sensitive strategies. Where gaps were identified, Gender Division makes recommendations for improvement.

The State Party holds national and local consultations with Women-led Organisations, Civil Society groups on different gender matters including gathering input on policy development, implementation as well as evaluation. This initiative of holding consultations ensures that the voices of the women are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

The State Party has developed the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the public sector to ensure that financial resources are allocated in a way that addresses gender disparities and promoted gender equality. It undertakes training programmes for budget officers in the line ministries to focus on gender responsive budgeting equipping them with the skills to analyse and integrate gender considerations into budget planning and implementation. Further, it also conducts various training workshops for government officials, private sectors, civil society to build capacity on gender mainstreaming.

26. Is there a national Human Rights institute in your country?

Yes.

The State Party has established the Human Rights Commission pursuant to Article 230 (1) of the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016. The Commission has a broad mandate to ensure that the Bill of Rights is upheld and protected. This includes protection of women against all forms of discrimination.

Peaceful and inclusive societies

Critical areas of concern:

Women and armed conflict

Human rights of women

The girl child

27. Actions taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

- **Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security**

The State Party has embarked on the development process of the first ever National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in alignment with UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The NAP WPS will enhance the participation of women in peace and security processes, protect women and girls from violence, and ensure their involvement in decision-making at all levels.

- **Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks**

The State Party's peace and security priorities revolve around maintaining political stability, addressing social tensions, ensuring public safety, and contributing to regional peacekeeping efforts. In addition, State Party shows solidarity towards women peace and security through hosting refugees and sending uniformed personnel to war-torn countries where humanitarian action is required. Further, the State Party has enhanced the recruitment of uniformed female personnel in peacekeeping assignments.

State Party has also launched the Zambia Police Service Gender Workplace Policy, to foster an enabling environment for gender equity and equality in the police service.

28. What actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings

- **Adopted gender-responsive approaches to the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflict**

The State Party has embarked on the development process of the National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) which will outline strategies to enhance the participation of women in peace and security processes, protect women and girls from violence, and ensure their involvement in decision-making at all levels. Further, the NAP will emphasize the need for gender-sensitive policies as well as the inclusion of women in peace and security efforts, from conflict prevention through to post-conflict reconstruction.

29. What actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

- **Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls**

The State Party has intensified advocacy on raising awareness on the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act No.1 of 2011 for protection, support, and legal recourse for survivors as well as the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015 which aims at promoting gender equality

and protect the rights of women and girls. It further provides for equal opportunities in various spheres and ensures non-discrimination, contributing to accountability for human rights violations.

- **Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response**

The State Party has enhanced training programmes for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights standards which helps in expediting the handling of gender-based violence cases.

The State Party provides Shelters and other support services for victims of gender-based violence in emergencies such as refugees and asylum seekers. Among other services refugees and asylum seekers receive include legal aid, psychosocial support, medical services and socio-economic support.

30. Actions taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls

- **Taken measures to combat discriminatory social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children**

The State Party has enacted the Children's Code Act, No.12 of 2022 of the Laws of Zambia. This is to eliminate discrimination and violations against the rights of a girl child through the provisions of the Act which now prohibits and criminalises child marriage. The legal age of marriage has been harmonised with the supreme law of the land at 18 years and this now protects girls from being married off.

The State Party through the Gender Division has continued to undertake Cultural Resetting programme as a measure to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence (GBV). This is done through a participatory engagement with the traditional leaders, religious leaders, communities as well as the boys and girls in form of Focus Group Discussions and dialogues. Among the topics for discussion are the preventive measures and response intervention that the government has put in place for their use.

- **Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training**

The State Party is now implementing a free education policy which aims at increasing school enrolment and retention rates among girls. It is also implementing the Menstrual Hygiene Management programme for adolescent girls to improve school attendance.

The State Party has continued to implement the Re-Entry Policy which allows for adolescent girls who become pregnant to return to school after giving birth. This helps prevent the permanent exclusion of young mothers from the education system and supports their continued personal as well as academic development.

- **Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage**

The State Party has continued to domesticate the provisions in international frameworks and agreements aimed at promoting the rights of the girl child, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and the national policies are aligned with the global standards. In this regard the State party enacted the Children's Code Act No 12 of 2022 which prohibits child marriage and amended the Marriage Act to increase the age of a child from 16 to 19 years. The State Party launched and implemented the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2016-2021 and its National Action Plan aimed at accelerating national efforts to end child marriage by 2030. Further, the State party has also been conducting sensitisations through cultural resetting with traditional and community leaders, traditional counsellors, parents and guardians with the aim to challenge cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities such as child marriage.

Environmental Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

Critical areas of concern:

Human rights of women

Women and the environment

The girl child

31. Actions taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation

- **Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources**

The State Party developed the National Policy on Climate Change in 2016 which is currently under review. The policy has provided for gender differentiation and implementation of gender measures in relation to climate change. The policy aims to improve participation of women, youth and children in climate change programmes and promote gender equity in accessing finances for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities. The measures are being operationalized in the climate change gender Action Plan (ccGAP). The ccGAP was developed to ensure that climate change, adaptation and mitigation programmes and projects mainstream gender. Further, the 2023 National Gender Policy provides measures to mainstream gender in climate change programmes.

The State Party has also developed a gender responsive National Determined Contributions (NDC's) in response to the Paris Agreement of 2016. The National Child Policy of 2015 has also addressed the impact of climate change on children by providing specific measures to improve their living conditions.

The State Party developed the National Adaption Plan 2023 which provides for special needs of women and girls in Adaption. The plan was formulated to address identified risks and vulnerabilities in various sectors to enhance the country's resilience to the impacts of climate change. It also identifies primary hazards and recognises that climate change poses significant risks to the country's natural resources, socio-economic development, and livelihoods. The plan

states that gender should be integrated in the planning and budgeting processes which include budgets allocated for Adaptation.

The State Party launched the Zambia National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2025 which aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, as well as maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy environment and delivering benefits essential for all Zambians.

The State Party has also developed the National Green Growth Strategy whose guiding principle among others emphasizes gender and intergenerational equity, equality, community cohesion, social justice, and support for the incorporation of the vulnerable groups, that is, women, the youth, the aged and persons with disabilities in the development process.

32. Actions taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience

- **Promoted access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation**

The State Party collaborates with Cooperating Partners and international NGOs to strengthen gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience initiatives. These partnerships support Zambia in leveraging technical expertise, resources, and best practices in integrating gender perspectives into national and local policies, programmes and projects.

The State Party developed the National Disaster Risk Management Framework-(2017 – 2030) operationalising the Sendai framework which intends to enhance the implementation capacity and capability of the country to significantly reduce vulnerability and contribute to resilience and sustainable development. Further it guides all-of-society engagement and partnership requiring empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation taking into consideration gender issues.

Further, the Social Cash Transfer (STCs) programme is one of the non- contributory schemes based on social assistance in form of cash stipend increased from K300 per month for persons with disability and K150 for the other beneficiaries in 2021 to K400 and K200 in 2023 respectively. Additionally, an extra K200 is being paid monthly for the year 2024 as a cushion to mitigate the impacts of the drought

SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

The State Party does not have a specific gender equality strategy. However, the State Party is riding on the Eighth National Development Plan 2022-2026 (8NDP) under the Strategy Three: reduce developmental inequalities through implementation of gender equality programmes and interventions. Further, the 8NDP has also prioritised interventions to tackle gender-based violence through Strategy Two: Enhance welfare and Livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people. The plan is mainly funded by Government and its partners.

To operationalize the plan, the State Party is implementing the National Gender Policy of 2023. The 2023 National Gender Policy, seeks to accelerate the attainment of gender equity and equality as espoused in the 8NDP. The Policy strengthens the coordination of an integrated and multi-sectoral approach in the implementation of gender programmes across all sectors. This policy aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 (SDG 5), which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

In line with SDG No. 5 the State Party has instituted legal reforms to eliminate discriminatory laws. The State Party is promoting women's representation in leadership through advocacy and mentorship programmes and implementing educational initiatives aimed at reducing girls' dropout rates. In addition, programmes such as the women economic empowerment have been used to support women's entrepreneurship. The State Party has integrated gender-responsive budgeting and collaborates with international organizations to implement and monitor these strategies. Despite these efforts, challenges such as cultural stereotypes, high levels of gender-based violence and limited access to education and healthcare in rural areas persist, requiring ongoing reforms and community engagement.

34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.

The State Party has clustered the implementation of programmes in the 8NDP where the agenda for the gender programmes falls under the Human Development Cluster. Through these clusters, the allocations and expenditures by different sectors implementing programmes on gender equity and equality, are monitored. The cluster reports tabulate the programme, key deliverable, projected resources, and allocated resources. Additionally, it reflects challenges encountered in implementing the programmes and recommendations.

To ensure that public funds are allocated effectively towards promoting gender equality and empowering women in different sectors, the State Party has embraced gender-responsive budgeting and planning (GRBP).

Through the GRBP, Ministries, Provinces, Spending Agencies (MPSAs) are required to incorporate gender considerations in their budget proposals. This involves identifying specific programmes aimed at reducing gender disparities and enhancing women's empowerment. The Ministry of Finance provides guidelines in the budget call circular for incorporating gender perspectives and other cross cutting issues into budget submissions.

The Gender Division, alongside the Ministry of Finance, monitors the allocation and expenditure of funds for women's empowerment, gender equity and equality. This involves budget analysis and expenditure reviews. In an effort to actualise this, the State Party through the Gender Division and the Ministry of Finance with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has developed the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Guidelines, a tool for mainstreaming gender into the budget process for the MPSAs. Further, the Gender Division has embarked on building capacity in the Members of Parliament in Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting. This will help the parliamentarians to scrutinise the budgets from a gender perspective as they are being presented for approval.

The Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) tracks budget allocations and expenditures, promoting transparency and accountability.

Civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly women's rights groups, play a significant role in monitoring GRB implementation, providing independent assessments, and advocating for increased funding for gender-related programmes.

35. Formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The State Party has established several formal mechanisms to ensure the participation of different stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These mechanisms facilitate inclusive and participatory processes, ensuring that the concerns and needs of women and girls, especially those from marginalized groups such as poor rural women, women with disabilities, and young women groups are reflected in national policies and programmes.

The State Party reports that a structure under the Office of the President, the Gender Division, is responsible for coordinating all stakeholders working on gender issues including the implementation of the National Gender Policy, the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda. The Gender Division coordinates gender equity and equality activities at national and sub-national levels including coordinating with Traditional leaders and community based organizations.

Different stakeholders such as Civil society organisations, faith based organisations, the academia, focusing on women's rights actively participate in policy formulation, advocacy, and monitoring of gender equality initiatives. They provide critical insights and data from grassroots levels, ensuring that the voices of women and girls are heard.

Committees such as the Parliamentary Committee on National Guidance and Gender Matters oversee the implementation of gender related policies and programmes. Inclusive consultations and stakeholder engagement have led to the formulation of more comprehensive and gender-sensitive policies and programmes. Multi- sectoral platforms and parliamentary oversight ensure that the government remains accountable for its commitments to gender equality and sustainable development.

The State Party is actively working with organisations and cooperating partners dealing in gender and other development issues that has been incorporated in the Four Cluster Advisory Groups at technical and policy levels under the Eighth National Development Plan.

36. Actions taken on the contribution of the preparation of the present National Report

A technical working group was formed to provide input for the drafting of the report. The technical working group was composed of representatives from Line Ministries, Civil Society Organisations, Women's Organisations, the Academia, Faith Based Organizations and United Nations Agencies.

37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State Party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.

The State Party remains committed to eliminating gender inequality and discrimination against women, as highlighted by its active participation in international human rights mechanisms such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The State Party underwent its last review under CEDAW in 2011 and its most recent UPR in 2023. These reviews resulted in several recommendations aimed at addressing gender inequality and enhancing the protection and empowerment of women. While the state party has no action plans for the recommendations of the CEDAW and UPR, the state party has been implementing the recommendations in the 2 conventions through its routine programming.

SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level

The State Party through the national statistical office in collaboration with the national gender machinery, has over the period under review been publishing the Gender Status Report to show progress made towards achieving gender equity and equality in the various development sectors. According to the evidence, notable strides have been made in health sector, economic participation, and in the education sector with improved access and retention for girls leading to narrowing literacy and enrolment gaps, thus promoting gender equality.

39. What are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics

The State Party has prioritised the following to strengthen national gender statistics:

1. To strengthen the integrated National Statistical System (NSS) which was established to provide for a coordination mechanism, collection, management and dissemination of statistics; promoting the use of statistical data as well as information at individual, institutional, national, regional and international levels;
2. Enhance capacity building on production and use of gender statistics across the sectors;
3. The National Statistical Office (NSO), will continue establishing statistical units in line Ministries, Provinces and other Spending Agencies (MPSAs) through the formulation and implementation of sectoral statistical strategies;
4. The National Statistical System (NSS) will continue to enhance the use of ICT in the production and use of gender statistics

40. What gender-specific indicators has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs

The State Party has prioritized several gender specific indicators for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Data collection process is done on the SGD 5 and other SDGS on various thematic areas such as health, education, labour force, decision-making through both primary and secondary data sources. Other indicators being monitored for progress include teenage pregnancy, child marriage, maternal mortality, Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases, poverty and agriculture.

41. Which data disaggregation's are routinely provided by major surveys in your country

The State Party provides disaggregated data by sex, age, geographical location, ethnicity, marital status, education, disability, household characteristics (headship, dwelling, household size).

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The State Party has made strides in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, since 1995 Gender has become an area of great interest in National Development. The key achievements have been highlighted in this report with progress including a gender responsive, legal framework, education, health and women employment and empowerment. Zambia has enacted laws criminalizing Gender-Based Violence and strengthening the referral system. Progress has been made in the education sector promoting education of women and girls. Policies and programmes to address gender issues have been undertaken, with efforts to involve traditional and religious leaders.

Despite these achievements, challenges still exist. In the recent past there has been an increase in funding to the women programmes through the CDF and other budgetary allocations, however, funding for gender programmes still remains low. Other challenges include limited economic opportunities for women, low levels of women representation in decision making positions and persistent cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality.

The next steps to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA include strengthening data collection to track progress effectively, increase budgetary allocations for programmes that support gender equality, expand economic opportunities for women through skills training and access to finance. Further, the State Party will focus on promoting women's participation in politics and continue challenging harmful social norms through education and community engagement.