



**Zambia's Report**

*For the*

**Fifth Africa Development  
Forum**

**Youth Leadership in  
the Twenty First  
Century**

September 2006

## **Executive Summary**

The report is the outcome of the national consultative meeting held in Lusaka, from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2006. It is based on seven selected national priority sub-themes of: Education and life skills; Employment and migration; Entrepreneurship; ICT; Health and HIV/AIDS; Participation in National Economic Policy; Culture and Intergenerational Relations and Gender. This report therefore, is an expression of the inputs by the Zambian youth in relation to the identified sub themes.

The National consultative process was held as a continuation of the National Youth Network Capacity Building Workshop supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It attracted a total number of forty-five participants from the nine Provinces of Zambia. The Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development in partnership with UNFPA organized the national consultative meeting and ensured that the participants critically discussed the sub themes including the charter in small groups and later in plenary. During the group discussions each group identified the major challenges and best policies and strategies that have been put in place as interventions. The youth also discussed the charter and have adopted the principles. The youth of Zambia have agreed to take affirmative role in the implementation of the Charter and this will be done through the existing structures notably Youth NGOs and Networks being coordinated by the National Youth Development Council under Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development.

This report therefore, is mainly formulated from the views and ideas provided by Zambian youth as contributions that could be fed into the core documents of the forum

## 1.0 Background

1.1 The population of Zambia is estimated at 10.5 million of which 40 percent is composed of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 (Central Statistics Office, 2000). In 1994 the government adopted a National Youth Policy in order to guide implementation of youth programmes and mitigate effects of the deteriorating socio economic conditions prevailing in the country. This deterioration started as early as 1980s resulting in increased levels of unemployment and poverty. At the time the policy was formulated it was noted that the youth had been affected by a number of problems. These included poor guidance, inadequate counseling and recreational facilities resulting in their engagement in substance abuse, crime, prostitution, and thus increasing teenage pregnancies and early parenthood especially among the female youth. The Zambian Government defines youth as a male or female person aged between 15 to 35 years. This working definition has been found ideal in the Zambian context in line with the prevailing social, cultural, political and economic situation.

1.2 It was also observed that there was inadequate life skills training amongst most youth to enable them engage in sustainable livelihood or obtain formal employment and finances to help them engage in gainful activity. The youth were socially, economically and politically alienated from the mainstream of national development. The existing educational system also did not guarantee continued education for youth. Government did not have adequate and reliable data to gauge with precision and certainty the nature, extent and magnitude of youth problems. Operational capacity in the institutions dealing with youth programmes was inadequate. There were gaps felt in the policies and guidelines for institutions dealing with youth development, especially in areas of HIV/AIDS, gender, substance abuse, culture and participation of youth in decision-making.

1.3 A number of youth organizations have also been established and are running youth programmes and projects. Among these are HIV/AIDS, peer education and vocational skills training, agricultural and social welfare projects. These have helped in supplementing government programmes, although they do not have adequate capacity to fully cover the youth needs. They are practical manifestations of youth leadership initiatives towards finding solutions to youth problems.

1.4 Most youth programmes in Zambia are further affected by a number of factors. These include: poor information flow from the Government and other stakeholders to the young people at district level; inadequate staffing levels in the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development with offices only going up to provincial level and that the officers are ill equipped both logistically, technically and financially to effectively reach out to all youths in districts. Poor access to the rural youth by the Ministry of sport, Youth and Child Development and other service providers limit the participation in national

youth programmes. As a result there has been poor coordination and networking of youth programmes in the districts as well as Provinces, leading to fragmentation. Poor road network and communication facilities have also contributed to poor information flow to young people.

1.5 The high HIV/AIDS prevalence levels among the youth, which range from of 16 – 21 percent have proved a great threat to youth survival in Zambia. High poverty levels that have affected 78 percent of the Zambian population, inadequate recreation facilities and limited information on HIV/AIDS especially in rural areas have contributed to these high levels of HIV/AIDS infections.

1.6 Youth unemployment is high both in the formal and informal sectors. The closure of industries in the various provinces due to the economic decline has reduced formal employment opportunities for young people. The limited number of Skills Training Centres, which are only two per Province, has limited youth's access to informal employment. This has been worsened by inadequate youth friendly credit facilities, which are a source of small-scale entrepreneurship among the young people. Furthermore youth find it difficult to access land and therefore cannot go into agricultural activities.

## **2.0 National Youth Consultations**

2.1 The national consultation towards ADF-V was a two-day consultative meeting under the leadership of Ministry Sport, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD) with the support of United Nations System through the United Nations Population Fund. The report of the national consultations will be fed into the core documents of the forum.

2.2 The aims of the national youth consultations were to:

- Share information on the agenda of the ADF-V and the African Youth Charter;
- To prepare a country position on key issues affecting young people; and
- Establish national level mechanisms for implementing post-ADF-V activities and programmes.

2.3 Key Outcomes

1. National position paper on ADF-V
2. Better Understanding of ADF-V by Zambian Youth
3. Better understanding of the approved Africa Youth Charter
4. well informed Zambian Youth

## **3.0 Deliberations of the Consultative Meeting**

3.1 The National ADF-V Youth Consultative meeting was chaired by the department and co-chaired by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The young people present recognized the importance of the three key clusters identified by ADF-V as cardinal to youth development in Zambia and Africa at large.

3.2 The following sub-themes were selected as priority:

- a) Education and life skills;
- b) Employment and migration;
- c) Entrepreneurship;
- d) ICT;
- e) Health and HIV/AIDS;
- f) Youth Participation in National Economic Policy;
- g) Culture and Intergenerational relations and gender.

**a) *Education and life skills***

3.3 Improving educational status is critical in the fight against poverty and hunger and in improving well-being for the country as a whole. Education builds people's abilities in terms of skills and the ability to receive and process information for livelihood choices. Zambia has committed itself to contribute to a number of international instruments and declarations that relate to education. In 2003 the total number of enrolment for grades 1-7 was 1,876,811 of whom 971,452 were males and 905,359 females (PRSP implementation progress report). Secondary Education is accessible for only a few young people while tertiary education is largely inaccessible due to the few colleges and universities in Zambia. The high fees in the tertiary institutions further worsen this. For instance, 6.2 percent of youth in the age group 15-19 years have had no schooling at all. 5.9 percent of youth in the age group 20-24 years have attained no schooling. 46.1 percent of youth between 15-19 years of age have some primary education and 25.8 percent among the age group 20-24 years have attained some primary education.

3.4 In order to redress the gender imbalances and inadequacies in the provision of education, the government has enforced a 50-50 enrolment policy at basic, high school and teacher training college levels for the females and males, ensure that 25 percent of available bursaries are reserved for female university students while the rest are competed for by both female and male students. The government has facilitated for the provision of more community schools especially in rural areas to increase access. The re-admission policy of girls who become pregnant back into school has increased enrolments for young women in Youth skills Training resource centres. The government has been providing education materials and bursaries to vulnerable children, orphans, equity and gender and HIV/AIDS. These interventions have led to the improvement, in terms of access to education at all levels. For example, there was a clear positive outturn in terms of basic enrolment, which increased to 75.5 percent for girls and 77.2 percent for boys.

**b) *Employment and Migration***

3.5 The economic crisis in Zambia, which was manifested through the rising inflation, increasing unemployment, deepening poverty and huge external debt had negative impact on the situation of the youth. Youth employment had increased in the past due to economic liberalization, privatization of state-owned enterprise and slow economic growth. Unemployment among youth

has been identified as one of the biggest problems, which has lead youth to be involved in crime, early marriage and other health threatening vices.

3.6 The government through the Ministry of Youth is committed to creating employment for youth in the formal and informal sectors. Thus the following are measures to ensure that the plight of youth is addressed for positive developmental purposes:

- Job creation, through opening of new and reopening of old industries;
- Enhance youth entrepreneurship development through provision of 'START UP' capital
- Establishment of Youth friendly credit lending facilities (Youth Empowerment Funds);
- Re-introduction of cooperatives with a youth wing;
- Review of policy of engaging retired officers on contract;
- Use of National Service Camps for youth development activities.

3.7 The following are the measures that would ensure youth empowerment and their involvement in Decision Making: -

- Ensure youth participation at all levels of public planning and political decision making bodies through close cooperation between the State, civil society and communities;
- Advocate for youth friendly labour
- Promote equal opportunities between young people, on the basis of competence and fair competition;
- Strengthen Inter-sectoral Cooperation on youth issues. Mainstream youth participation and increase budget allocation targeting youth in all Ministries;
- Strengthen the inclusion of volunteerism to build youth NGOs capacity on volunteer management and internal exchange;
- Ensure gender balanced and representation of all provinces with not less than two seats for disabled youth.

3.8 On migration, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) released its State of the Population Report 2006 in September, highlighting the number of youths migrating across borders and the need for both departing and receiving countries to offer better opportunities for them. Young people between 15 and 29 years of age make up half of the international migration flow. Migration in Zambia is one of the biggest challenges to enhanced economic development. There are two kinds of migration currently existing in Zambia. One is the Rural –Urban migration and the other is international migration. Most of young people that have been trained in various professions are leaving the rural areas in preference for the urban areas. This has in turn created congestion in the cities arising into other complex challenges such as lack of accommodation, poor sanitation, streetism, HIV/AIDS and other youth problems. The other trained youthful manpower has been leaving the country to other countries in search for greener pastures. To address this great challenge, the youth of Zambia propose the following measures:

- Youth Out grower schemes. These are helping young people through setting up of a community driven industrial base in tourism

development, Agriculture and commerce. Most young people are settling in their areas as they have something to do, which empowers them and reduces their poverty.

- Government should continue working on a system that would retain workers in various professions who have been leaving the country
- The development of youth as a profession and the birth of the youth workers association of Zambia

### **c) *Entrepreneurship Development***

3.9 The UNICEF, World Bank, IMF and UNDP report that over 40 percent of the population of Sub-Sahara Africa including Zambia lives in absolute poverty on a purchasing power parity of less than a dollar per day. In Zambia 73 percent of all Zambians are living in poverty, 58% live in extreme poverty and 15 percent are in moderate poverty (CSO 2000). In this regard, the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Initiative a programme within Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development, promotes sustainable livelihoods among young people in order to reduce poverty, and enhance living standards. Entrepreneurship development can be attained through enterprise training, micro-credit, extension and advisory services as well as research into other innovative approaches. The youth policy's primary objective is to support efforts that create economic opportunities for the youth and minimize failure in youth enterprise development endeavours.

3.10 Youth entrepreneurship has also been recognized as an integral component of development. To encourage improvement of the quality of life of a Zambian youth, entrepreneurship through both formal and informal enterprises will be given enabling environment. In order to address the issue of entrepreneurship the following Strategies are proposed;

- Strengthen youth enterprise programmes incorporating small scale business management, basic skills and business training;
- Encourage savings among the youth;
- Strengthen systems and structure for coordination and management of entrepreneurship;
- Link youth enterprises to multi-lateral companies as well as franchise holders;
- Develop and strengthen the market outlets for the youth's products at all levels.

### **d) *Youth and ICT***

3.11 Information and Communication Technology is crucial for youth development. It has opened doors to improved communication and participation. ICT has the potential to create social and economic opportunities through continuing education, employment and empowerment opportunities. Most of the young people in Zambia are unable to access ICT's. This is because of the fact that ICT's are located along the Zambian line of rail. This leaves most of the youths disadvantaged in accessing vital

information. In rural areas, the situation is even worse. Also, lack of basic skills in ICT's has been a major hindering factor in accessing ICT's. Even those young people living along the line of rail are unable to access ICT's due to limited skills.

3.12 The Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development works together with the Ministry of Communications and Transport to promote sustainable ICT programmes targeted at youths to increase employment opportunities and increase access to training. MSYCD promotes the operation of Internet café as a potential area for entrepreneur development among youths and women for their information and communication at national level. The government is also developing ICT Programmes that focus on youth issues relating to employment, education, HIV/AIDS and the promotion and encouragement of ICT training among the youth and youth workers/professionals in government institutions, NGOs, Faith Based Organizations and Advisory Boards.

The following measures are proposed:

- Facilitate the integration into Youth Resource Centres of special training programmes for youths in ICT.
- Improve youth access to ICT especially in rural areas.
- Facilitate connectivity and access to communication service including Internet in Youth Resource Centres and learning institutions.
- Develop appropriate ICT infrastructure at all levels for dissemination of information in youth health related issues and support.

**e) *Health and HIV/AIDS***

3.13 The government's commitment to the objective of improving the quality of life of all Zambians is demonstrated through its efforts to improve quality of health care delivery. Government has also taken cognisance of meeting the millennium Development Goals of reducing Child Mortality and Improving Maternal health. ASRH services are a key component of a broader reproductive health programme. However, access is limited to urban youth population. In many communities in Zambia some cultural practices and norms often place women at a disadvantage and pose great risk to their health and that of their children. Zambian adolescents are at a high risk of unwanted pregnancies, STIs, HIV infections due to early sexual initiation, low use of contraceptives including condoms and other high-risk sexual behaviours such as commercial sex work, sexual violence and drug and substance abuse.

3.14 Across all age groups, the impact of HIV and AIDS has affected and devastated the lives of millions of Zambians. As a result both children and adults have to deal with poor health, sickness and death. Many families are overwhelmed by the social, economic and emotional costs of the epidemic. Girls and young women (15-24) comprise the majority of young people living with HIV/AIDS. The face of youth AIDS epidemic is clearly female-young woman and girls constitute more than 75% of all those aged 15-24 living with the disease. Limited female power to resist pressure to have sex or to

negotiate the circumstances of sex contributes to the increased feminisation of AIDS.

3.15 Government has taken a multi-sectoral approach in the fight against the pandemic. In this regard, Government, working with other stakeholders, stepped up efforts and programmes aimed at preventing and controlling the spread of HIV and AIDS, promoting care for those who are infected and affected, and reducing the personal social and economic impact of the epidemic. Major interventions have included HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns, voluntary counselling and testing, prevention of mother to child Transmission, Anti-Retroviral Therapy, home based care, care for orphans and vulnerable children and the work place programme. Zambian youth are particularly vulnerable to HIV and AIDS as a result of:

- Limited access to HIV/AIDS reproductive health information
- Lack of life skills based HIV and AIDS information and education
- Limited access to quality Youth Friendly reproductive health services
- Lack of a safe and supportive environment to facilitate effective reception of information and to develop skills and services related to prevention, education and mitigation

#### *f) Youth Participation*

3.16 Young people in Zambia comprise of 78% of the total population, however, youth are still not visible or active participants in communities, national or international fora. Despite the acknowledgment at the international level for youth leadership, it is critical to reassume these commitments and put in place strategies to capacitate youth to leadership roles. The future of the world and the world's best chance to find lasting solution to some of its most pressing problems come from the youth. Young people need the capacity, support and opportunity to lead and develop skills that will propel them to take on leadership roles at all levels so as to realize a peaceful and prosperous future.

3.17 Young people also cited political participation by all citizens as a prerequisite for successful democratic society. And citizenship does, in fact, figure prominently in the mission statements of the national youth policy. The young people noted that majority of youth in Zambia are socially and economically disadvantaged. They have no adequate access to the basic conditions required to develop and live an independent life. It was realized that youth have been neglected or rather marginalized in decision-making processes in the private and public sectors due to delayed retiring age and demand for experience. These conditions are youth unfriendly and have lead to lack of representation in matters that affect them. However there is a lot of hope as the youth in Zambia have become vibrant and innovative and have been identified as possible source of manpower for national development programmes.

The following are the proposed measures:

- Provide an enabling environment that develops young people's potential and desire to participate in matters that affect them during the nurturing processes;
- Strengthen participatory process in the implementation of policy and Developmental programmes that concern the youth;
- Involve the youth in the regular review and formulation of legislation, policy and decision making including politics
- Encourage youth nurturing for their roles in Parliament as Parliamentarian through exposure to parliamentary procedures as Governors by encouraging them to apply good Governance traits in running youth initiated Organisations/institutions.

**g) *Culture and Intergeneration Relations and Gender***

3.18 Zambia is a land of many cultures; the fact that there are 73 tribes harmonisation of cultural values becomes an issue. Certain beliefs and customs have perpetuated gender imbalances, which have disadvantaged young women. They include traditional ways of socialising girls and boys. These are perpetrated through formal and informal institutions such as the family, schools, places of work and the courts of law. Harmful traditional practices such as sexual cleansing/inheritance, early marriages, polygamous marriages further impact on the gender inequalities. The establishment of the Zambia Victim support units in the police service has assisted greatly in curbing gender violence and providing legal protection to the victims. Intergenerational sexual relationships increase the vulnerability of the young partners to contract STIs including HIV and AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. HIV and AIDS risk increases with increase in number of sexual partners such as polygamous marriages and concurrent partnership. Gender inequalities experienced by young women and girls in accessing education, health services and employment contribute to their vulnerability. Society norms that promote the macho image of a man contribute to the inequalities in society. The challenges are that culture takes long to change, while HIV and AIDS epidemic spreads rapidly.

**4.0 Pan African Youth Charter and ADF-V Program**

4.1 The young people also went through the pan African charter and adopted the principles. The youth agreed to take affirmative role in the implementation of the Charter and this will be done through the existing structures notably Youth NGOs being coordinated by the National Youth Development Council and Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development. In the same principle the participants adopted the proposed ADF-V program.

**5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 Young women and men are not only a major resource and inheritors of future society; they are also active contributors to the nature of society today. The government of Zambia recognizes and values young women and men as a key resource and national asset and places their needs and aspirations

central to national development. The government and its corporating partners provide a foundation and mechanism for youth participation in socio-economic development whilst recognizing that young people should be protagonists of their own development and not merely recipients of state support. The government of Zambia and its corporating partners has recently revised the youth policy in order to serve the youth of Zambia better and increase youth participation in social, political and economic development.