

ZIMBABWE STATEMENT: NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR IFAD 13 REPLENISHMENT

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNORS: ACCELERATING ACTION FOR FOOD SECURITY

Smallholder Farms Land and Labour Productivity

Zimbabwe is endowed with abundant agriculture land and a tropical climate that enables the growing of up 23 crop and livestock enterprises. The current focus is on increasing smallholder farmer's crop and livestock production and productivity; sustainability and resilience to climate and other shocks; and increasing competitiveness on the domestic, regional, and international market. Zimbabwe has made great strides to meet national cereal requirements during normal and above normal seasons. IFAD 13 is invited to join the cause.

Water Harvesting, Land and Irrigation Development

There are also abundant available water resources, with up to 10 000 small – medium dams that have potential to irrigate up to 2 million ha. The country is exploring incentives that can crowd in private sector-led land and irrigation development around these water bodies to complement public efforts. The target is to increase area under irrigation from 193 000 ha to 350 000 ha by 2025. IFAD 13 has great potential to leverage private sector investment financing into land and irrigation development through matching grants, and concessionary loans and other blended finance mechanisms.

Women and Youths Targeting and Mainstreaming

Sixty-seven (67%) of Zimbabwe's population live in rural areas as smallholder farmers. Of this population, 52% are women, while youths are over 70% of the national population. The smallholder farmers constitute 99% of farmers and hold about 95% of the agricultural land. This detects that IFAD 13 should

focus on rural areas, agriculture, and smallholder farmers, mainstreaming them into rural agriculture value chains. IFAD 13 should also focus on women and youths if it is to transform agriculture and food systems in the rural subspace. These must both be targeted and mainstreamed into the main agriculture economy by addressing their special access challenges to material, financial, and technological resources.

Vision 2030 Strategic Outcomes

Zimbabwe has a vision for achieving a prosperous upper middle-income economy by 2030. IFAD 13 should contribute to the following outcomes that are precedent to vision 2030:

1. Food and nutrition security.
2. Import substitution and foreign currency savings.
3. Export diversification and foreign currency generation.
4. Value addition and agro-processing
5. Employment and job creation
6. Increased farm income to middle-income level
7. Improved standards of living of the rural people

Enabling Policies and Institutions

To achieve these outcomes, Zimbabwe has an Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation Strategy (AFSTS), which seeks to attain an US\$8.2 billion agriculture economy by 2025. Significant progress was made during the 2021/22 season, where the country recorded an increase from US\$5.1 billion to a US\$8.1 billion agriculture economy. This momentum must be maintained through a sustained increase in smallholder agriculture productivity, climate resilience, and competitiveness, which are the focus of the several anchor investment plans that are currently in place.

These include the Agriculture and Recovery Plan (ARP), Livestock Recovery and Growth Plan (LRGP), Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan (HRGP), Accelerate Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Plan (AIRDP), Integrated Agriculture Information Management System (AIMS). The AFSTS is currently under review and several other anchor plans are on the cards. IFAD 13 is an opportunity for continuing to improve the country's institutional and policy environment for smallholder agriculture and food systems transformation.

Climate Proofing Investment Model

Top on Zimbabwe's agenda for agriculture and food systems transformation, is climate proofing of agriculture and food systems. Zimbabwe has adopted a 2-pronged approach: **First**, is the promotion of conservation agriculture. Three (3) million smallholder farmers were supported under this approach in 2022/23 and 600 000 households are set to benefit in 2023/24. **Second**, is Water Harvesting and Irrigation Development. In 2022, nearly 20 000 ha of irrigation were developed, and several dams completed in addition to the stock of up to 10 000 small – medium dams. IFAD 13 provides an opportunity for IFAD to assist Zimbabwe put 350 000 ha under irrigation by 2025.

Rural Industrialisation Model

The development of smallholder farmers will bring about rural development, which will bring about rural industrialisation that will eventually see the realisation of our six strategic outcomes. This is being pursued through a programme we have dubbed **Rural Development 8.0**. The comprise 8 rural development initiatives around:

- Conservation agriculture for **cereals** (maize, traditional grains), and **cotton** for 3 million and 400 000 families respectively
- **Poultry** and **goat** schemes targeting each household in rural areas with at least 10 chickens and 10 goats.
- Distribution of 1kg of **tick grease** to 1.8 million livestock farmers for the control of January Disease and help smallholder farmers preserve the benefits of public investment under the Livestock Recovery and Growth Plan.
- **Integrated Youth Incubation Centres**, one in each of the 10 provinces of the country, training youths in all aspects of agriculture and enabling access to land.
- Distribution of **10 Fruit trees to each of the 1.8 rural households** supported by an aggregations system.
- **Borehole drilling** and establishment of **Village Nutrition Gardens** targeting each of the 36 000 villages and 9 600 schools.

IFAD 13 can support the rural industrialisation and enable value addition of smallholder farmers produce for sell locally and urban areas.

IFAD Programmes Alignment to National Priorities

Smallholder Irrigation Recapitalisation Programme

Zimbabwe would like to congratulate IFAD for the good work that is carrying out in the country, which highly aligned to national priorities. Through the Smallholder Irrigation Recapitalisation Programme (SIRP), IFAD and supported the development of 5,720 ha of smallholder irrigation schemes, and feasibility studies for irrigation development of 6 673 ha. A total of 6 652 water users were trained in O&M and leadership. While 200 Youths were trained in irrigation maintenance and

repair. Zimbabwe would want to see IFAD 13 building on SIRP success stories that have seen lives change in rural Zimbabwe by putting more resources into the programme and continue complementing the Accelerated Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Plan (AIRDP). IFAD 13 is an opportunity for IFAD to play a more pivotal role in mobilising and crowding in more private funding into irrigation development with catalytic funding mechanisms.

Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Programme

The just started Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Programme (SACP), which is in its first year of implementation is well set to promote rural value chain development through private sector financing under Public-Private-Producer Partnerships. The programme recognises the population dynamics and focuses on the agriculture value in poor rural regions. This focus on rural value chains, and smallholder farmers, including women and youths is crucial for transforming rural areas.

Horticulture Enterprise Enhancement Programme

Zimbabwe has just concluded the 3rd innovation: Horticulture Enterprise Enhancement Programme (HEEP). This programme will be instrumental in mobilising private sector financing into the horticulture sector. This is a fast-growing sector with great potential for improving rural livelihoods, nutrition security, and export, and foreign currency generation by rural farmers.

Zimbabwe's Contribution to IFAD 13

I want to conclude by congratulating IFAD as the foremost development financial institution that is working with Zimbabwe, not just in developing programmes, but most importantly in implementation, thereby guaranteeing relevance, ownership, and sustainability. Zimbabwe will

continue national consultations among the relevant institutions to contribute to IFAD 13 Replenishment to enable IFAD to continue its mission: investing in rural people to ensure sustainability, resilience, and inclusive end to poverty, hunger, and malnutrition across the world.

Thank you.