



WORKSHOP REPORT

**Raising Awareness, knowledge and critical engagement of the wider citizenry
on SDGs – Mutare**

19 October 2017

Supported By



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1.0 Background to the Workshop

This report provides key highlights of the proceedings from PRFT's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) awareness raising meeting held in Mutare on 19th October 2017. The awareness raising reached out to more than 40 participants who were representing a diversity of local organizations including people with disability, gender and human rights groups. The meeting came at an opportune time for the residents and local communities in Mutare as it happened before government's SDGs Provincial Launch programs scheduled for the 26th of October. The dialogue meeting equipped the residents of Mutare with awareness and knowledge on the SDGs, which is critical for their effective engagement with the Ministry of Macro-economic Planning and Investment Promotion as the coordinator of the SDGs implementation process in the country, as they already begun to raise pertinent questions for the ministry to respond to.

2.0 Specific objectives of the Meeting

- To generate local level awareness and appreciation of SDGs that will strengthen the capacity of local communities to participate and engage the government on its SDGs implementation strategy
- To discuss with local stakeholders the socio-economic impacts of the cash crisis and implications for the achievement of the SDGs.

3.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Presentation – Judith Kaulem – Executive Director of the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust

3.1 Overview of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

The Executive Director, Judith Kaulem presented on all the 17 Goals that the UN member States committed to implement between 2016 and 2030. The 17 Goals are summarized below:

- **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- **Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- **Goal 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

- **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- **Goal 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- **Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- **Goal 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- **Goal 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- **Goal 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss .
- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

She mentioned that the adoption of the United Nations SDGs agenda aimed to tackle the unfinished business of the MDGs agenda emerging issues, threats and sustainability. She indicated that the 2030 agenda is anchored on four important principles namely, Universality, Transformative, comprehensive and inclusivity (Leaving no one behind). The SDGs seek to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: Economic, Social and Environmental.

The presentation reiterated that the promise to “leave no one behind” within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development meant that its implementation should be informed from below, by the participation of marginalized populations, especially women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth, indigenous populations and older people in the implementation processes.

She indicated that the 2030 Agenda clearly recognizes that the Sustainable Development Goals are ambitious and their realization cannot be achieved through the work of one entity alone. The Director reiterated that there is need to build strong collaborations and partnerships between multi-stakeholders including government, private sector and CSOs in order to achieve the SDGs Agenda. CSOs were challenged to play a pivotal role in complimenting the government efforts. Emphasis was put on the SDGs’ underlying principles of universality and inclusivity, underpinning the implementation of the SDGs with active participation of stakeholders and increased uptake of multi-stakeholder and voices by government.

3.2 Government's SDGs Implementation Strategy

The Director also took time to appraise the local stakeholders and residents on the Government's SDGs implementation strategy. She indicated that the government through the Ministry of Macro Economic Planning and Investment Promotion has prioritized to implement 11 Goals although there is commitment from government to implement all the 17 Goals. The priority goals were aligned to the ZimAsset Clusters as shown below:

ZimAsset Clusters	SDGs Goals
1. Food Security and Nutrition	1,2,3,6, 12,13,14 and 15
2. Infrastructure and Utilities	3,7 and 9
3. Value Addition and Beneficiation	9 and 12
4. Social Services and Poverty Reduction	3,4 ,5 and 6
5. Public Administration and Governance	8,10,11 and 16
6. Fiscal Reform Measures	8,10 and 17

The Director applauded government for adding goal number 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions to its priority list. She indicated that development has come as a result of collaborated voices from different platforms including PRFT Zimbabwe Reference Group on SDGs. In its advocacy position, PRFT had joined other like – minded organisations to raise the concern that SDG 16 which speaks to governance and accountability issues was not part of the government's 10 priority Goals yet it was important for the realisation of other goals. She indicated that Goal number 16 is important as it speaks to the government's political willingness to deliver on all SDGs commitments.

3.3 The SDGs Reporting Mechanism

On reporting mechanism for SDGs, the Director indicated that each nation which is a signatory to the 2030 agenda is expected to present its progress at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) that takes place in New York annually. The Voluntary National Reviews serve as the basis for international review by other countries. The High Level Political Forum provides an opportunity for governments to present their progress, challenges and lessons of the SDGs implementation. She indicated that the key challenge for now is that there is no opportunity for CSOs to share shadow/ parallel reports for VNR process hence the need for CSOs to effectively engage the government at the local level to make sure that its voice is captured in the government's main reports.

The Director used the platform to share with the participants, the developments that had taken place with regards to SDGs implementation and the involvement of PRFT and the reference Group¹ in engaging the government in that regard. She highlighted that the government of Zimbabwe volunteered to be peer-reviewed together with 43 other countries at the HLPF in July 2017. She reiterated that although it is government's role to report on progress, the reports should reflect a collective input from all stakeholders. This justified the activity that the PRFT and the Reference Group took to make an input into the VNR. On behalf of civil society organizations which participated in consultations under the auspices of the Zimbabwe CSOs Reference Group on the Sustainable Development Goals in May 2017, PRFT produced a report (<http://www.prftzim.org/publications/thematic-research-reports/#>) which captured shared advocacy messages on the Zimbabwe's readiness for the implementation of the SDGs from the CSOs perspectives. She indicated that the CSOs Reference Group's report was shared with UNDP and the Ministry of Macro Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, a government ministry tasked with leading the implementation of the SDGs agenda in Zimbabwe. The Director indicated that although the government's report did not capture the group's key recommendations regarding the need to have political will, transparency and accountability in the implementation of the SDGs agenda, the fact that they heard our voice indicates a great milestone for the Reference Group. She urged the participants not to be left behind and to take advantage of the Government's Provincial consultation on ZIMASSET 2, Special Economic Zones and the SDGs were scheduled on 26th October 2017 in Manicaland province to demand accountability and collaboration in the implementation of SDGs.

¹The Zimbabwe Reference group on SDGs was formed officially launched in April 2017 and is currently made up of the following apex CSOs organizations: Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (Convener of the Group), National Council for Disabled People in Zimbabwe, Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, National Council for the Welfare of Children, National Association of Youth Organizations, SAYWHAT, HelpAge Zimbabwe, Media Institute for Southern Africa, CARITAS Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

3.4 The nexus Between Socio- Economic Rights and SDGs

This segment saw the participants discussing the key link between socio- economic rights and SDGs. It was noted that while SDGs themselves are not explicitly framed in the language of human rights but most of the targets are. SDGs have also developed a set of human-rights informed indicators to determine the degree of development. The presentation alluded to the fact that;

- Several SDGs focus on important Social& Economic rights areas as poverty (Goal 1), Food & Nutrition (Goal 2), health (Goal 3), Education (Goal 4) and water & sanitation (Goal 6).Goals on the environment, climate change and natural resources are also linked to human rights enjoyment.
- 12 of the 17 Goals promote human well-being through sustainable use of natural resources.
- Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on income inequality and exclusion (social, economic and political) have been included to address growing inequalities within and between countries
- The other Goals and targets also include important language on equal and universal access (e.g. to healthcare, education & energy) reflecting the core human rights principle of non-discrimination and equality.

3.5 How Not to Leave Anyone Behind

The presentation revealed the need for meaningful, engagement reflecting the following best practices:

- ✓ **Long-term, regular and continuous;** in her presentation, the Director emphasized the need for meaningful engagement which should be long-term, regular and systematic. She urged participants to take advantage of the Provincial SDGs launch programmes to engage the government on the mechanisms that are available to ensure that government interaction with communities on SDGs goes beyond the provincial launch meetings. The Director however challenged the participants not to wait for government's SDGs programmes at local level or demanding accountability from government only but there is need for CSOs to collaborate among themselves and implement programmes on SDGs so that there is a shared responsibility.
- ✓ **Well organized and with equitable access to resources-empowering stakeholders** e.g. vulnerable groups for effective participation; She indicated that link between goals and targets also means that there should be a proper coordination among government ministries so that they don't work in silos. She reemphasized that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has a key role in ensuring that resources are channeled towards SDGs implementation. She also highlighted that for CSOs to effectively collaborate with government and compliment efforts for the achievement of the SDGs,

there is need for equitable access and distribution of resources both financial and technical support.

- ✓ **Encouraging stakeholders' contribution to SDGs implementation and accountability**
-In adherence to the “Leave No One Behind” Principle, inclusivity and access to information on the SDGs is of paramount importance. She highlighted that for effective engagement to happen and building strong partnerships, citizens need information as guaranteed by the country's Constitution.
- ✓ **Open, transparent and clear**
- ✓ **Systematic, well-planned and structured**

In terms of monitoring the SDGs, the presentation paid special emphasis on the need for a “data revolution”. This includes more sensitive disaggregation of data along multiple lines that overlap with many traditional grounds of discrimination. She indicated that the indicators for SDGs monitoring and evaluation should speak to the lived realities of women and other vulnerable groups facing high incidences of poverty and social exclusion.

In conclusion, she reiterated that

- ✓ While the SDGs were formulated at the global level, their implementation is primarily at the national and sub-national levels
- ✓ The SDGs process presents the opportunity for a new era of policy-making that makes a reality of the simultaneous integration of economic, social and environmental imperatives.
- ✓ For the SDGs to be transformative, their implementation has to be financed.
- ✓ The national budget should respond to the SDGs implementation through allocating and **DISBURSING** resources to public services that benefit the poor and marginalized.

3.6 Key Messages generated

Below are some of the issues that were raised from plenary

- Residents noted the need to engage the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion on the mechanisms available to ensure continuous interaction between government and residents on SDGs at local level
- Participants also noted the need to engage the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on the financing side of the SDGs.
- There is need for government to ensure inclusivity both in terms of participation and policy formulation so that poverty and inequality is reduced

- Lack of inclusive and tolerant governance system was cited as a key factor that is contributing to social exclusion and poverty. In this view, there is need for government to create an environment which allows residents to access their basic human rights.
- Government should come up with targets and indicators that speak to the lived poverty realities and discrimination faced by marginalized groups and communities
- The discussion revealed the need to build capacity of local CSOs in monitoring SDGs implementation so that they are not left behind
- Participants highlighted the need for CSOs to move from just demanding disbursements from the national budget to tracking if the disbursed resources are actually used in the manner they were intended for, especially at local level
- The local stakeholders acknowledged the need to have more collaborations and platforms among CSOs to complement the government in popularizing the SDGs at grassroots level. CSOs noted that more has to be done especially around building the capacity of grassroots communities to hold the government to account through increased information dissemination and advocacy. It emerged from the dialogue meeting in Mutare that very few people are aware of the SDGs. The need for extensive awareness raising initiatives was highly recommended. The participants recommended PRFT and the Reference Group on SDGs to facilitate more collaboration on SDGs awareness at grassroots level.

4.0 Social and Economic engagement on the implications of cash crisis – Nyasha Nyatondo

Further to the generation of a number advocacy messages on SDGs implementation, PRFT undertook a socio- economic dialogue on the Basic Needs Basket. The residents of Mutare were engaged on the socio-economic implications of the current cash crisis in the country. The dialogue helped to consolidate a study (accessed on <http://www.prftzim.org/download/prfts-policy-brief-on-cashless-society/>) on the social and economic implications of the move towards a cashless economy that PRFT undertook in the previous quarter.

The major issues that were highlighted paid attention to the ability of the ordinary citizens to meet the Basic Needs Basket. The deliberations of the dialogue unearthed pertinent insights on how the cash crisis predicament was impacting on livelihoods and drew lessons from the same. Key issues raised by the residents include;

- Residents indicated that the move towards plastic money further marginalizes them as many ordinary citizens are unbanked

- The people in Mutare acknowledged that some of them now resort to bribing security guards at banks so that they are able to get in-front of long queues in-order to access the little cash that is being provided by banks
- A rise in domestic violence cases between couples has been noted by the residents and CBOs working with communities in Mutare. The cash available for households to spend on food and other basic goods is becoming limited giving rise to fights over use and prioritization of the limited cash resources.
- The cash shortages were also noted to be affecting consumer's preference for food items. Consumers indicated that they were facing limited choices with regards to where they want to conduct their shopping and the goods they would prefer to purchase. Residents noted with concern that they end up buying from retailers that they would prefer not to buy from because they are the only ones with POS machines. These shops were noted to be a little expensive over those that people prefer most.
- Local CBOs present at the meeting argued that the rate of extra-marital affairs has been on the rise due to the cash crisis. According to the participants, spouses (women and men alike) are engaging in extra marital affairs in-order to get cash that can be used to buy food items for the family. They also argued that this has become prevalent among women who are economically disadvantaged as they are engaging in extra-marital affairs in order to get the cash to support the children
- It was also noted with concern that the cash crisis situation was also exposing young girls to sexual exploitation and indecency. The deliberations indicated that teenage girls were being used by their guardians as bait to get services such as maize milling without having to pay cash because it is not available. An example of the state of affairs was given by concerned citizen as cited below;

Example

Pane tsika yave kuitika yekuti vakadzi vechikuru kana vakunotsvaga chikwereti kunogaisa, vanoenda nevanasikana vavo vobva vati mukadzi wako uyu akarara nenzara unoda here kuti anorara futi nenzara kumba uko

Translation

There is a tendency among mothers when looking for milling services on credit to go with their daughters to the grinding mill and pleads that her maize be grinded for free (because she has limited cash that is not enough to pay the services or has no cash at all) claiming to the miller that he would not afford to let his "wife" (the daughter) die of hunger just because she (the mother) has no US\$1 to pay for the milling charges

In this view, the cash crisis was said to be causing decay in morals and social fabric of the society.

- The coping strategies employed by some people including barter trading were seen to be highly compromising on their assets. Residents noted that they are paying for goods and services with subsistence goods. For instance, it was noted that people were giving off a gallon of maize as a payment for the grinding meal charges. It was revealed that the form of barter trade was impoverishing people by depleting their stock which would have otherwise been sold and used to fund a wide range of household basic needs.
- The discussion also revealed that the cash crisis was affecting people who have no other means for surviving outside income generating projects and pensioners were cited as an example. Lack of access to cash was said to be inhibiting their smaller businesses.
- Furthermore, it was also revealed that the lack of access to cash was contributing to the increase in demand for small food packages that serve immediate/ daily food purposes (commonly known as *tsaona* by the local people) on the local market was attributed to the cash crisis. Due to the fact that people do not have money to purchase food items in huge amounts, they are buying food stuffs that only serve daily needs because of the crisis. The cash crisis has stripped off people the ability to purchase basic goods that can sustain a family for longer periods of time. The households are vulnerable to food insecurity and nutritional deficiencies.

4.1 Recommendations

Several recommendations emanated from the lively deliberations during this meeting, including the following:

- While acknowledging that cashless-ness is becoming a new economic frontier, PRFT strongly recommends that the infrastructure to support a cashless economy should be put in place before forcing it on people.
- PRFT urges the government and commercial banks to come up with programs which connect unbanked people with safe, low-cost accounts that will cushion the poor informal sector workers and enables them to join the e-commerce movement.
- CSOs should embark on programs that raise awareness around financial literacy and help the government achieve the National Financial Inclusion Strategy targets.
- Investment should be done to improve banks' ability to handle errors and depositors concerns that come as a result of the transition

- The Government and Financial sector should make policies that aim to restore fiscal sector confidence in-order to attract the unbanked sector and attain financial inclusivity.
- Government should restore productive capacity to generate income for both private sector and government. This will also reduce the amount spent on imports, reducing the trade deficit and ultimately grow the economy.

5.0 Appendix



Picture: Delegates attending PRFT's SDGs Public Awareness Meeting in Mutare



Judith Kaulem (PRFT Executive Director) presenting an overview of the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 during a public Meeting in Mutare