To mark the 67th anniversary of the United Nations, this fifth issue covers 2012 UN Day celebrations with a focus on “Green Economy for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction”. This issue also highlights the 2012 ZUNDAF High Level Annual Review; UN support to the development of a National Contingency Plan for 2013, as well as support to strengthen agricultural cooperatives for the improvement of food security. The last set of articles focus on thematic issues of women empowerment, HIV & AIDS, as well as updates from the “Wednesday @ UNIC” public discussion forum.

As part of the 2012 UN Day Celebrations to mark the 67th anniversary of the United Nations, a Joint UN-Government Symposium was held on 5 November in Harare under the theme, “Green Economy for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication”.

According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, green economy is defined as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

The symposium, attended by 250 delegates from Government, UN, Diplomatic Corps, Development Agencies, Civil Society, Private Sector and Academia, provided an opportunity to promote partnerships and raise awareness on the need to build a green economy.
economy in Zimbabwe with focus on sustainable energy and decent jobs.

Opening the symposium as a co-host, Hon. Tapiwa Mashakada, Minister of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion said, “The Government of Zimbabwe believes that building a green economy allows to better realize development objectives and accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.”

On his part, co-host Mr. Alain Noudehou, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator noted, “A green economy approach to development planning is fundamental for our ability to generate growth, reduce poverty and inequalities and at the same time protect our environment for present and future generations.”

In a recorded message for the 2012 UN Day Symposium Dr. Kandeh K. Yumkella, Director General of UNIDO said that the theme of the Symposium, creating decent jobs and clean energy, was consistent with the views of the UN Secretary General.

He further noted, “Zimbabwe, being a major agricultural company, can switch and leapfrog to modern renewable energy by producing bio energy, hydropower, solar and wind energy, which provides opportunities for off grid and mini-grid energy services at community level in real time with low cost compared to centralized power generation.”

The symposium highlighted that building a Green Economy is critical for Zimbabwe to: provide a sustainable means of livelihood to an estimated 70% of its population who live in rural areas and derive their livelihoods from agriculture; increase access to sustainable energy as only 37% of households in the country have access to reliable energy; and generate decent and green jobs to tackle high rates of unemployment, particularly among the youth who represent over 50% of the population.

As such, the panellists identified four critical sectors as enablers to build a green economy in Zimbabwe: Mining, Manufacturing, Tourism and Agriculture. Zimbabwe has institutional frameworks and environmental policies in place which provide good foundations for building a green economy, including issues of energy and jobs.

The UN in Zimbabwe is supporting these national efforts through the Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) for 2012-2015.

To ensure that outcomes of the Symposium were capitalised upon, an advocacy document highlighting the Perspectives from the UN Day Symposium for a Green Economy was shared with all stakeholders.

Other advocacy activities undertaken for 2012 UN Day Celebrations includes joint UN Country Team statements on the occasion of World Food Day and World Poverty Eradication Day published in both public and private newspapers. On 18 October, the United Nations also launched youth awareness outreach activities in 25 high schools in high density districts of Harare and at Harare International School with interactive sessions on the role of the United Nations in Zimbabwe and the MDGs.

On 24 October, the UN Country Team together with the Government hosted a media breakfast meeting with over 30 Editors and Senior Journalists representing local and international media. During the media encounter, the UN Country Team and the Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Ray Ndhlukula, responded to media queries which included Zimbabwe’s progress on the MDGs, Sustainable Development and Post 2015 development agenda, UN assistance to climate change adaptation as well as agricultural input support to increase food production.

While addressing the media, Dr. Ray Ndhlukula expressed the Government’s determination to deepen the existing partnership and collaboration with the UN Country Team. He further added, “The UN family has been open, recognizes national ownership, and is mutually respectful in our joint development and humanitarian endeavours.”

Accordingly, the ZUNDAF high level annual review meeting was held on 29 November in Harare. The main objective of the meeting was to assess the contributions of the 2012-2015 ZUNDAF to the national development priorities articulated under the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2011-2015.

The ZUNDAF, designed to respond to the evolving national context, incorporates principles of recovery and development with stronger linkages with other complementary programming, coordination and funding tools, such as humanitarian appeals.

On his part, co-host from the Government, the Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Ray Ndhlukula said, “ZUNDAF high level review is a policy oriented meeting and offers us an opportunity not only to discuss technical programmatic issues but also to touch on policy matters that relate to the implementation of the ZUNDAF.”

As per 2012 ZUNDAF Annual Review (first year of 2012-2015 implementation), 61% of ZUNDAF indicators are on track, 22% are constrained, and 17% are met. The ZUNDAF has therefore provided a successful framework onto which concrete UN results can be achieved.

Some of the 2012 ZUNDAF achievements highlighted during the annual review:

- National energy policy to ensure optimal supply and utilisation of energy for sustainable development was developed and launched;
- National Gender Based Violence Strategy to combat violence against women and girls was developed and launched;
- National Plan of Action to implement UPR recommendations was developed to enable the country to align with international human rights obligations;
- A comprehensive National Housing Policy was adopted and 2,500 housing units were delivered to vulnerable households;
- All primary and secondary school children have 1:1 pupil-textbook ratio;
- 1.9 million children were vaccinated and 92% health facilities were supplied with 80% essential medicines;
- One million people were assisted with food under the Seasonal Targeted Food Assistance; 32,000 children with protection services; 20,000 households benefited from social cash transfers; and 43,375 returned migrants received assistance;
- 2000 young men and women were supported with jobs and livelihoods;
- 310 communities and 13,000 school children have access to safe water, as well as 200 rural communities and 237 schools have access to improved sanitation;
- HIV treatment (ART) services have been expanded to 94% of all health facilities;

The review meeting, co-hosted by the UN Resident Coordinator and Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, was attended by approximately 90 senior level participants representing Government, United Nations, International Development Agencies as well as Civil Society Organizations.

In his opening remarks as co-host of the high level review meeting, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Alain Noudehou said, “The ZUNDAF 2012-2015 signifies the UN’s role and collective contribution to the Medium Term Plan, 2011-2015.” He further noted that the ZUNDAF recognizes the advances made by the country, in economic growth and in some areas of development, and focuses across the themes and sectors where challenges remain, and where there are recognized lags or a possible reversal of gains made.

The ZUNDAF M&E plan ensures development results are achieved and sustained.

(Clockwise from bottom left) - Co-hosts of the High Level 2012 ZUNDAF Annual Review, Dr. Ray Ndhlukula, Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, and Mr. Alain Noudehou, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator; participants of the High Level 2012 ZUNDAF Annual Review.
The humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe has continued to improve and remains largely stable. This is due to the concerted effort by the Government of Zimbabwe, the United Nations, donors and other humanitarian partners.

Despite positive gains, pockets of humanitarian challenges remain, with the country on transition to recovery and long-term development. The current humanitarian challenges include food insecurity and sporadic outbreaks of waterborne diseases. In addition, a range of highly vulnerable groups such as returned migrants and asylum seekers continue to require humanitarian assistance.

While responding to humanitarian needs, the United Nations has been working in support of the Government to enhance Zimbabwe’s capacity to prepare for and effectively respond to disasters, thereby enhancing resiliency. Hence, to support disaster prevention, response and mitigation, the Government and the United Nations, together with humanitarian partners developed a National Contingency Plan.

On 22 November 2012 a workshop was held to review and agree on a National Contingency Planning Framework. The objective of the workshop was to identify priority hazards likely to cause disasters during 2013 and to raise awareness on existing national coordination structures.

Addressing the workshop, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Alain Noudehou said that Zimbabwe has experienced an increase in hazardous events like disease outbreaks, floods, droughts and storms.

He further noted that while it is understood that natural hazards cannot be prevented from occurring, their effects can however be mitigated through early warning systems and effective emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and early recovery systems.

Based on experience and projections, partners categorized the hazards Zimbabwe is likely to face as hydro-meteorological – comprising floods and droughts; epidemiological – focusing on current waterborne disease outbreaks.

Zimbabwe experiences localised floods almost every December in districts such as Chipinge, Chiredzi, Muzarabani and Tsholotsho, which affect many lives and livelihoods. In addition, the country is experiencing food insecurity, leaving about 1.6 million people in need of food assistance this current season. Parts of the country have also been affected by waterborne disease outbreaks with some 400,000 cumulative diarrhoea cases between 1 January and 4 November 2012, while at least 36,000 cumulative dysentery cases were reported over the same period.

Once completed, the Contingency Plan exercise will provide a plan, which will enable the relevant stakeholders to mount a timely and coordinated response to anticipated hazards, thereby minimizing potential humanitarian, economic and environmental consequences.
Over the last year, the world felt the devastating impacts of high food prices, man-made and natural disasters, which have exacerbated hunger and poverty. Globally, nearly 870 million people suffer from chronic undernourishment worldwide—that’s one in eight people.

In Zimbabwe, Agriculture is the backbone of the economy as in many developing countries. It contributes 15-20% of GDP, 40% of exports, and 60% of raw materials used by the domestic manufacturing industry. Over the past decade there has been increased food and nutrition insecurity emanating from reduced productivity.

The United Nations, is embarking on the process of resuscitating and strengthening cooperatives that had been adversely affected by the economic challenges of the past decade.

To achieve this, the United Nations, through the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) 2012-2015, has been supporting national efforts on food security.

The United Nations has provided technical assistance to ensure resiliency by developing national climate change strategy, reviewing land tenure system and facilitating an extensive agricultural input support programme. In addition, the United Nations supported the development of food and nutrition policy that harmonizes economic growth to improve food and nutrition security.

“The key to attaining food and nutrition security at household level in Zimbabwe lies with the ability to support farmers to improve their productivity, diversify their production and commercialization of their farming systems,” says FAO Representative in Zimbabwe, Dr. Gaoju Han. “This can be effectively achieved when farmers are organized in cooperatives to produce for the market, meeting requirements in terms of quantity, quality and consistence.”

To promote the importance of cooperatives, 2012 World Food Day was commemorated at the Nharira Dairy Cooperative in Chikomba district, which also celebrated the National Dairy Farmer of the Year awards.

“The United Nations is working with agricultural cooperatives and farmer organizations through the local purchase initiative, capacitating smallholder farmers to improve production capacity and maximizing the impact of local food procurement on economic growth”, WFP Country Director, Mr Felix Bamezon has said.

At the occasion, over 1,500 invited guests had the opportunity to visit small scale dairy farming cooperatives. During the tour, the National Dairy Farmer of the year, Ms. Sibusisiwe Madyangove explained how members of the cooperative deliver their milk to the Centre which is then processed into different dairy products, such as sour milk and yoghurt.

The United Nations advocates for food security at household and national levels, with particular focus on farming families and agricultural cooperatives. As such, the Government, with the support of the United Nations, is working with agricultural cooperatives to improve food production capacity.

The Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises, Hon. Sithembiso Nyoni noted that the current agricultural cooperative model of enterprise in Zimbabwe was established to promote agricultural growth, empower the poor and to lead to real development. Currently, Zimbabwe has at least 5,000 registered cooperatives, an increase from 4,600 recorded last year.
In order to promote women’s empowerment and support Zimbabwe in achieving its national development goals, the United Nations in Zimbabwe has been supporting the establishment and implementation of laws, policies and frameworks that promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

One of the major undertakings has been to provide women with economic opportunities. As such, the United Nations initiated a Broad-Based Women’s Economic Empowerment Framework to provide women with access to market and micro-credits opportunities.

The sixth edition of the UN supported (UNDP, UN Women and IOM) Market Fair to expose women in urban and rural areas to local and international markets was held from 2-4 November 2012. Over 150 women who owned small enterprises participated in this edition, an increase from the 120 that took part in the previous Market Fair in Harare.

“UN initiates a broad-based women’s economic empowerment framework”

Speaking at the Market Fair, the guest of honour and European Union Ambassador, Mr. Aldo Dell’Ariccia encouraged women to be organised and consider exporting their goods to the growing market in Europe.

“We are excited about the prospect of seeing our work in homes, hotels, offices and overseas”, remarked Ms. Ncube, a basket weaver from the remote areas of Binga. “It will be a good opportunity for us to earn more from our work and take better care of our families.”

Meanwhile Sophia Mwiinde, a single mother of two has seen her meager income as a trader in the Siachilaba Fish Market increase from USD 100 to USD 200 a month. As one of the first women on a kapenta fishing rig provided with support from the UN Women, she recalls with pride how her fortunes have now systematically improved for the better. “I have managed to pay school fees for my children; learned how to budget, something I knew nothing about; and I’ve learned what it means to work as a team to produce something,” she said.

In addition, the ZUBO/ Basilizwi Trust and the Women in Development Savings and Credit Union, opened the first bank for women in Binga, which was officially inaugurated in October 2012. WDSCU has 14 banks across the country and while this is the second bank in Zimbabwe’s Matebeleland Province, it is the first one in the rural areas of the province. The United Nations, through the generous support of the EU, DFID and DANIDA, provided a grant for the startup of the bank in Binga.

The bank has disbursed some 126 loans on average of about USD 250 since it opened, and according to the Director of WDSCU, Sphiwe Gudza, the re-payment rate in Binga is 97%.

“We have assisted women who had no capital for their projects, who have now managed to stock their small businesses, start poultry and goat projects and improve their fish trading,” Gudza said.

The women on the kapenta fishing rig have a group account at the new bank, and they also access loans as individuals to supplement their income through individual projects. There are 475 members of the bank and 371 of these are shareholders. Since it started, the bank has managed to build a financial base of USD 4,625 from joining and shareholders fees.

“First rural bank opened to support women access loans to startup business”
People Centred Approach to AIDS Response in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe’s response to HIV has been characterized by high impact investment on prevention interventions that are aligned with national, continental and global priorities.

The country, with the support of the United Nations and other development partners, has managed to reduce new HIV infections by 50% in the last decade. This can be attributed to significant investments in behaviour change, condom promotion and prevention of mother to child HIV transmission and Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART).

The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare with the support of the United Nations has scaled up and decentralized adult and paediatric ART services to 94% of the health facilities. While Zimbabwe has managed to reach universal access to adult ART, much work still needs to be done to increase uptake of ART for children.

UNAIDS Country Coordinator Ms. Tatiana Shoumilina said, “In the next 1000 days before the MDGs deadline, Zimbabwe will need to sustain scale up and coverage of services, step up the know your status efforts, increase coverage of paediatric ART, ensure the quality of services”.

The major factors that have contributed to the positive trend in reversing the AIDS epidemic are that Zimbabwe’s HIV response is people-centred, evidence informed and highly focused. The factor of critical importance has been sustained national ownership of the response and alignment of United Nations and other international support with national priorities.

Inclusive participation has remained a priority in the response. Young people are participating in the national response at all levels represented by the Young People’s Network. Parliamentarians are also increasingly engaged, providing an interface between community and decision-making at all levels. The UN Joint Team on HIV and AIDS provided technical and financial support for the development of a five year strategy to guide parliamentarians.

“The strategy clarifies how parliamentarians can position themselves to enhance HIV support at constituency and national levels to ensure that the voice of the voiceless is heard, quality services are available at all levels and the shared responsibility agenda is fully implemented” said Ms. Shoumilina.

UN supports Parliamentarians to develop a five year strategy to guide their actions on HIV

The country has managed to increase TB/HIV coverage to 70% in 2012 from 30% in 2011. There is an impressive increase in the survival rate on ART with 75% in men and 80% in women in the last twelve months. The number of AIDS - related deaths decreased to 2,971 in 2012 from 3,788 in 2009 which represents a 21% decline.

94% of all health facilities now provide adult and paediatric ART services
The “Wednesday @ UNIC” public discussion forum featured topics of “Peace and Development” and “MDG targets of HIV and AIDS” on 26 September and on 05 December 2012, respectively.

UNESCO Harare Cluster Office Director and Representative, Professor Luc Rukingama gave a public lecture on peace and sustainable development at the 3rd “Wednesday @ UNIC” Public Discussion Forum held on 26 September 2012.

Addressing about 60 participants, Prof. Rukingama noted that since its establishment, the United Nations has been promoting peace and sustainable development through peace-making, peacekeeping, and providing development and humanitarian assistance, as well as promoting good governance.

The UN in Zimbabwe supports the strengthening of national mechanisms for peace building and the prevention, management and resolution of conflict under the 2012-2015 Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF).

In addition, the United Nations advocates for access to quality education for all, especially women and girls, as a breakthrough strategy for peace and development. Prof. Rukingama underlined that to ensure peace and achieve sustainable development, there must be a concerted effort to harness the power of science for the benefit of all societies and must advance the right of every man and woman to speak out and be heard.

Meanwhile UNAIDS Country Coordinator, Ms. Tatiana Shoumilina, presented an update on HIV targets of the Millennium Development Goal number six (MDG 6) on 5 December 2012 at the 4th edition of the “Wednesday @ UNIC” public discussion forum.

The targets on HIV under MDG 6 include achieving by 2010 universal access to treatment for HIV for all those who need it and having halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV.

Guided by a clear national strategy coupled with innovative investment initiatives, with the support from the United Nations and other development partners, Zimbabwe is on track to achieve the AIDS related targets of MDG 6.

“Zimbabwe on track to achieve the AIDS targets of MDG 6”

Sustaining scale up – especially of paediatric Anti-Retroviral Treatment - and improving quality and coverage of services through inclusive participation and partnership, as well as ensuring strategic investment for greatest impact are key to attaining MDG 6 in Zimbabwe.

Over sixty (60) participants from government, UN, International Development Agencies, Civil Society, the media and students attended the session on MDG 6.