The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

A Pathway Towards Inclusive Economic Development and Promotion of Decent Work

Challenges, Opportunities and Future Prospects

Background Paper Prepared by Naome Chakanya, LEDRIZ for the ZCTU/LEDRIZ High Level Conference on SDGs

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1. Background and Introduction

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, also referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), came into effect in January 2016 following the expiry phase of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. A total of 193 Member States of the United Nations reached consensus on Agenda 2030 by August 2015. The Agenda 2030, contains a set of 17 Goals, 169 **Targets and indicators**. The SDGs compared to MDGs are broader in scope and are meant to (i) build on the successes of the MDGs, (ii) address the structural challenges and gaps that limited the full realisation of the MDGs; and (iii) address the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. Compared to the MDGs which contained only 8 Goals and 21 targets, the SDGs cover a broader spectrum of areas with ambitions to address inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice, among other areas.

According to the ILO, the SDGs and targets will stimulate global and national action over the period 2016 to 2030 as the goals and targets are global in nature, universally applicable, takes into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national policies and priorities. The goals are independent, interconnected and mutually reinforcing, hence, they require an integrated approach in implementation.

In addition, the ILO emphasised that SDGs takes into account what has been summarised as the 5 'Ps' namely people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Each of the 5Ps is regarded as critically important for the following reasons:

i. ***People*** – The SDGs are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment;
ii. ***Planet*** – The SDGs emphasise protection of the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that the planet can support the needs of the present and future generations;
iii. ***Prosperity*** – The SDGs stress that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature;
iv. ***Peace*** – The SDGs foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies free from fear and violence since there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development; and,
v. ***Partnership*** – The SDGs underscore the need to mobilize the means for implementation anchored by a revitalised global partnership for sustainable development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed particularly on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Overall, the SDGs are different from MDGs in that:

i. The MDGs were produced by a small group of experts whilst the SDGs are broader in scope and addresses the interconnected elements of sustainable development (economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection);

ii. The MDGs focused primarily on the social agenda whilst SDGs apply to the entire world, developed and developing countries;
iii. The MDGs were intended for action in developing countries only whereas the SDGs are universal and apply to all countries;
iv. The MDGs were mainly donor driven whereas the SDGs core feature of is the means of implementation through the mobilization of domestic and international resources, public and private sectors financing whilst Official Development Assistance (ODA) is still necessary to help finance sustainable development to assist the least developed countries. In addition SDGs are anchored on building national stakeholders capacities and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
v. Development of the MDGs was undertaken by a limited number of stakeholders whereas development of the SDGs was a more inclusive approach which took into consideration the interests and concerns of trade unions, hence, the ***"Leaving No One Behind"*** became the SDGs principle.

According to the SDGs Framework, each government sets its national targets taking into account national circumstances. As a result, the Zimbabwean government developed the Zimbabwe Position Paper on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which prioritises ten (11) SDGs namely **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; **Goal 9** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; **Goal 13** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; **Goal 16** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions; and, **Goal 17** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

In addition, the government has also shown its commitment to SDGs by institutionalising multi-stakeholder committees for consultation and implementation of the SDGs through the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion. In pursuit of this commitment, the government also presented its Voluntary National Review (NVR) on SDGs at the High Level Political Forum on SDGs held in New York in July 2017. Clearly, these developments illustrates the high level of commitment by the government of Zimbabwe, thus trade unions in Zimbabwe need to position themselves for effective engagement at national level and should not be left outside of the national SDGs dialogues and implementation processes. The voice of trade unions is critical as trade unions command a huge constituency (workers) whose voices need to be amplified especially given that SDGs 8 is at the heart of trade unions work and contains a set of objectives that trade unions are currently working on at various levels. Hence, trade unions need to be strategic in identifying entry points and opportunities to engage the government and to hold the government accountable to fulfilling the SDGs and decent work.

2. The link between the SDGs and the Decent Work Agenda

The ZCTU and its affiliates have for the recent past years been seized with advocating and engaging the government, employers and other national stakeholders for the achievement of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda namely employment creation, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue. The ZCTU and its affiliates have been fighting strongly for the attainment of decent work at workplace levels through various organising, education and awareness and advocacy programmes. The ZCTU, with the support of its research institute, LEDRIZ has also been actively involved in the development of the Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Programmes (Z-DWCPs), whose priorities fits well with the SDGs. Therefore, the 17 Goals provide a broader and comprehensive framework and a great opportunity for trade unions in Zimbabwe to pursue implementation of the Decent Work Agenda pillars. The SDGs also provides the opportunity for trade unions to influence and shape the development discourse of the country towards pro-poor and inclusive developmental strategies.

3. Challenges inhibiting attainment of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda

3.1 Employment Creation Pillar

Deindustrialisation, structural regression and the growth of the informal economy has reached catastrophic levels. The number of workers losing jobs through company closures and retrenchments continue to rise significantly. For instance, the Minister of Finance in the 2015 National Budget indicated that 4,610 companies closed down between 2011 and 2014, affecting about 55,443 workers. Furthermore, undermining employment creation was the 17 July 2015 Supreme Court Ruling which resulted in more than 20,000 workers losing their jobs in three weeks following the judgement.

In 2017, the ZCTU President indicated that about 163 companies applied for retrenchment between January and June 2017 thus affecting more than 2 000 workers. The affected workers are forced to join the informal economy as a survivalist strategy.

Sadly, informality both in the formal and the informal economy is associated with low and irregular income and thus high poverty risks abounds especially among women who are predominantly in the lower strata of the informal economy. The 2014 Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (LFCLS) stated that 94.5% of the currently employed persons 15 years and above were informally employed. In addition, of the 1.5million in paid employment, 1.4million were in informal employment (up from 84.2% in 2011 and 80% in 2004). Furthermore, 98% of the currently employed youth aged 15-24 years and 96% of currently employed youth aged 15-34 years were in informal employment.

Furthermore, the FinScope Survey of 2012 indicated that the Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) employed about 60% of the workforce and contributed about 50% of GDP and 85% of MSMEs were unregistered. The survey also noted that out of the 2,8 million businesses that took part in the survey, 53% of the 2 million individual entrepreneurs were female and out of the remaining 800 000 business owners with employees 54% were female, hence reflecting the critical rile that women play in the economy and especially in the informal economy.

Sadly, the majority of people in the informal economy and especially women are at the very bottom of the economic and social ladder, working under precarious conditions; they typically suffer from decent work deficits, with its defining characteristics being that their work is graded as "*3Us + E*" 'unprotected,' 'unregistered,' or 'unrepresented' and 'excluded,'. They also suffer from serious social protection deficits. Worse more, the informal economy work spaces pose health and life risks especially for women. A sad case in point is that of 2014 where an informal economy woman whose baby was crashed by the municipality vehicle as she tried to run away from the police.

Worryingly, the government's approach towards addressing the growth of the informal economy has been antagonistic which contrast with the principles of inclusiveness and effective participation of the informal economy players and their associations as enunciated by the draft Strategy on Formalising the Formal Economy being spearheaded by the Ministry of SMEs.

An emerging threat to employment creation is climate change. The past droughts have negatively affected workers in climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture, energy and tourism. As a result, jobs in these sectors are threatened and this will consequently affect trade union work and strengths in these areas.

Whilst the government proclamations that it has created more than 2 million as promised during the 2013 election was flagged recently in the media, what is of importance in the development context is not only the quantum of employment but the quality of the employment and its propensity to catapult the majority of the people from high poverty and "working poor" status to productive and sustainable and decent livelihoods.

3.2 Workers' Rights Pillar

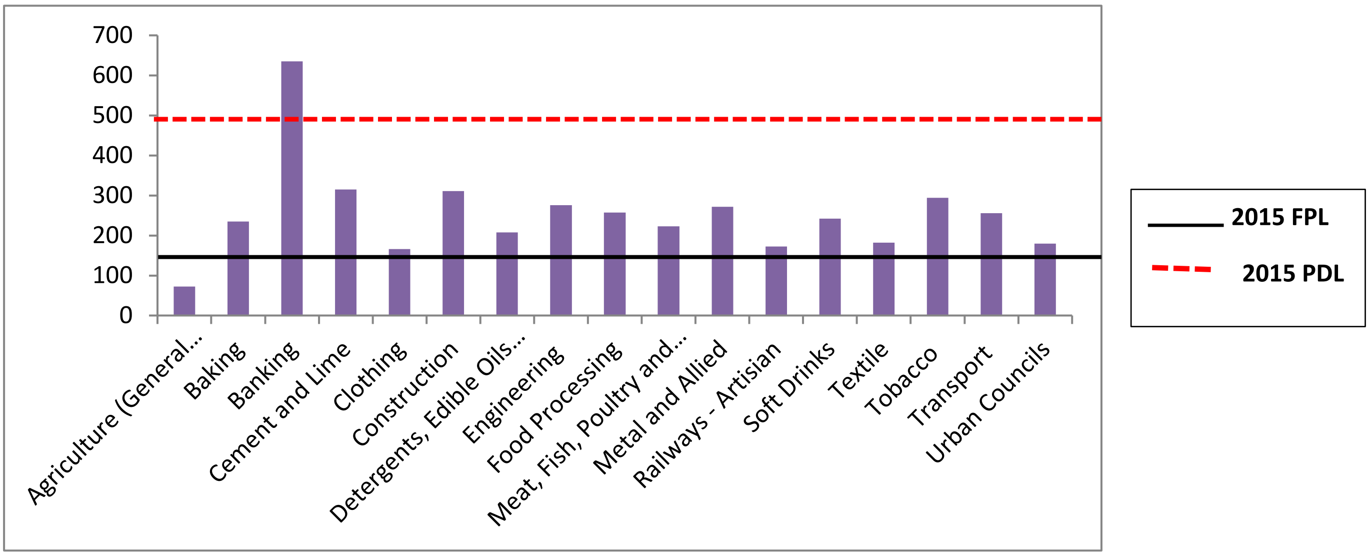
i. Wages and salaries versus the Cost of Living

Figure 1 shows the sectoral minimum wages of 2014/15 versus the 2015 national Food Poverty Line (FPL) and Poverty Datum Line (PDL). The FPL for 2015 was US$156 the PDL was US$156. Figure 1 shows a saddening picture of the state of most workers in Zimbabwe where the sectoral minimum wages have failed to be more or at par with the PDL. Whilst most of the sectoral minimum wages except general agriculture were able to meet the FPL, the majority of the sectors could not meet the PDL except for the banking sector.

Using Table 1, the analysis revealed that agriculture sector workers are classified as totally poor. The majority of the workers are in the "poor" category whilst the banking sector workers are regarded as non-poor. Poverty wages are a sign of decent work deficits.

Ultimately, Figure 1 and Table 1, it clearly shows that wages in Zimbabwe have failed to lift workers out of poverty, ranking them as the *working poor* according to the ILO standards. In view of this, there is an urgent need for the creation of an equitable earnings structure that ensures that all workers earn a decent and living wage as well as adjusting and maintaining the minimum wage for workers in line with the PDL, thus undermining SDGs 1,2,3,6,8 among others.

Figure 1: 2014/15 Sectoral minimum wages versus 2015 FPL and PDL



Source: LEDRIZ 2015 CBA Audit Report & Database

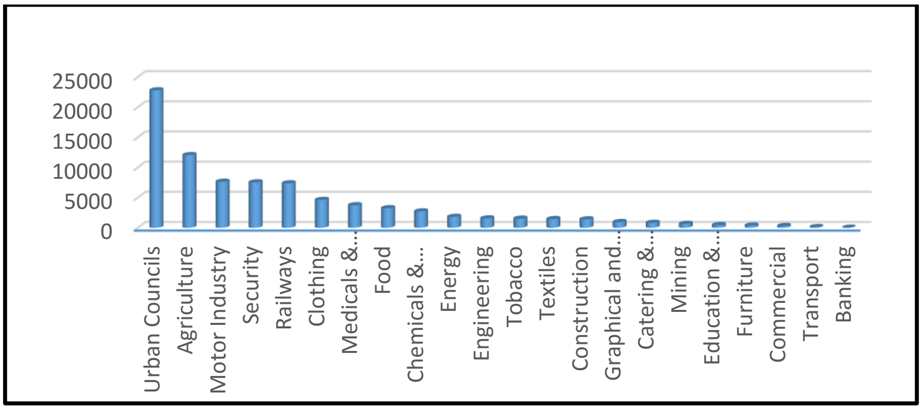
Table 1: Classification of households by income

Household Description	**Status Classification**
Households whose expenditure per capita cannot meet basic food requirements	Very poor
Households whose monthly expenditure per capita is equal to the Food Poverty	Poor
Households monthly expenditure per capita is equal or above the TCPL	Non-poor
Households whose incomes are below the FPL	Totally poor (the very poor and poor combined).

ii. Wage theft

Failure to pay what workers are legally entitled to and where employers take money that belongs to their employees and keeping it for themselves is called wage theft. This is a clear violation of international labour standards, as well as national legislation on the employment of workers. One of the most daunting and emerging challenge for workers between 2014 and 2016 has been the non-payment of salaries by employers. A survey by LEDRIZ and Solidarity Centre (2015) based on 442 companies indicated that a total of 82,776 workers were affected with non-payment in 2015. Figure 2 shows the sectoral distribution of non-payment of salaries in 2015.

Figure 2: Sectoral distribution of workers affected by non-payment of wages and salaries, 2015



Source: Wage Theft Survey (Solidarity Centre/LEDRIZ), 2015

According to Figure 2, the top ten sectors affected by wage theft were urban councils (22,228), agriculture (12,034), motor industry (7,622), security (7,514) and railways (7,354). The least affected was the banking sector with 10 workers at one company. Non-payment of salaries has reduced the workers of Zimbabwe to be the working poor. The same survey revealed that unions non-payment of wages and salaries averaged between 3 and 25 months across sectors with the worst affected being engineering, chemicals and plastics, transport, food, transport, graphical and printing, tobacco, medicals and pharmacies and agriculture. The least affected sectors were furniture, energy and clothing.

Non-payment of wages and salaries is a clear indicator of decent work deficits and a violation of ILO Convention on Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95). It also translates to incapacitation of workers to adequately provide decent living for their families and undermines attainment of SDGs 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,10 among others.

iii. Violation of other fundamental rights and freedoms of workers

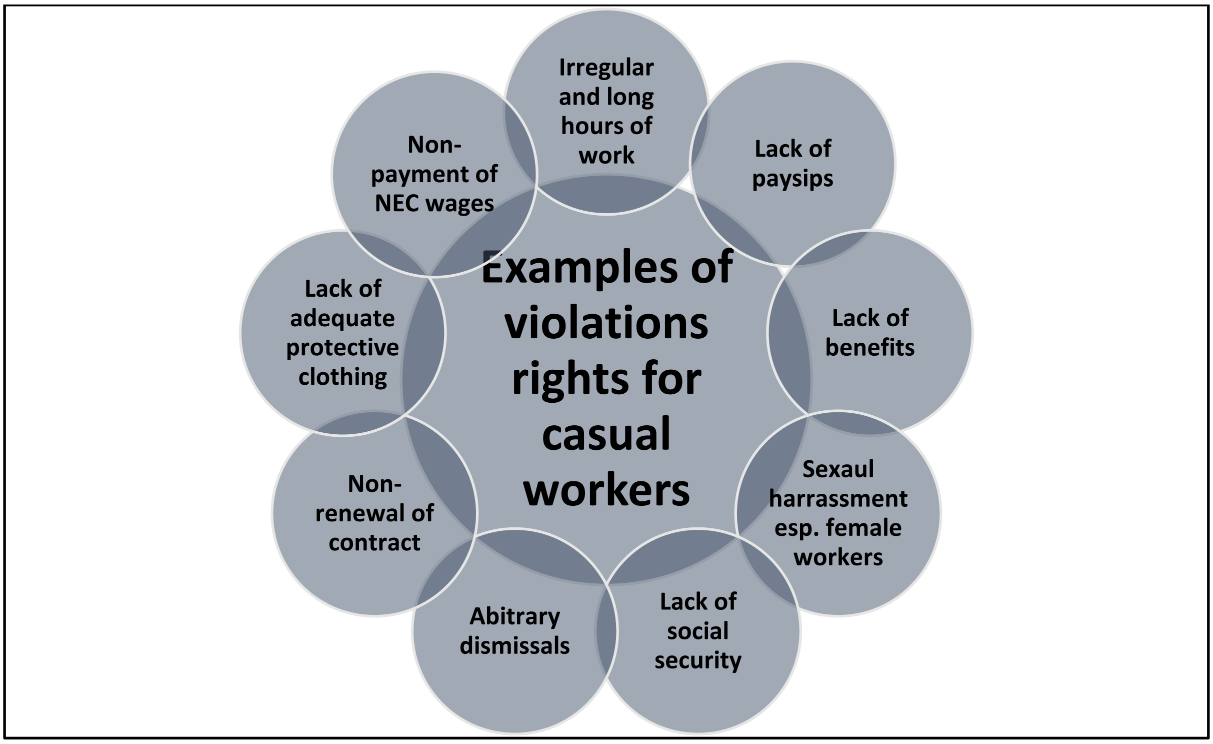
Over the years, trade unions have suffered violation of their rights as evidenced by the following:

- ✓ Arbitral dismissal of workers, for example, through the 17 July 2015 Supreme Court ruling. The judgement resulted in massive retrenchments of workers whose number had reached over 20,000 in three weeks following the judgement;
- ✓ Introduction of labour market flexibility measures by the government which has weakened trade unions as more workers have become precarious workers, most of whom will not contribute union dues thus constraining the financial base of the unions;
- ✓ Refusal to align collective job action to the Constitution of Zimbabwe;
- ✓ Ministerial influence in collective bargaining processes;
- ✓ The non-remittance of union dues by the companies thus negatively affecting sustainability of unions. For instance, by 2016, the Zimbabwe Construction and Allied Trades Workers Union was still owed US$485,000 by various employers in the construction industry, the Ceramics and Associated Products Workers Union US$15,700 by various employers in the ceramic industry, and the National Mine Workers Union of Zimbabwe US$39,360;
- ✓ Deliberate ignorance by some employers to ignore directives from the National Employment Councils (NECs);

- ✓ Emergence of anti- trade unionism employers especially from beneficiaries of the through the Government Indigenisation and Empowerment Programme; and,
- ✓ Economic impasse resulting in a number of collective bargaining deadlocks and reference of cases for arbitration whose process takes forever long.

Figure 3 provides a summary of some of the worker's rights violations emanating from high casualization rates in Zimbabwe.

Figure 3: Examples of violations rights for casual workers



3.3 Social Protection Pillar

The fragile and volatile economic environment has undermined attainment of social protection in Zimbabwe. Continued informalization of the economy and the fall in formal sector employment means that fewer and fewer people are contributing to social security in Zimbabwe. For instance, the 2014 Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (LFCLS) indicated that only 2% of the population were receiving any monthly pensions or any social security funds. The report also revealed that only 9% of the population were beneficiaries of any medical aid scheme or health insurance, which is about 1.3 million persons, thereby exposing the majority of the citizens to poverty risks. Worse more, pension pay-outs by NSSA are very paltry with a minimum of about US$60 per month versus a PDL of almost US$500.

Another challenge is that the majority of employers are not contributing to or remitting worker's pensions and or gratuity funds. In the event of an accident or death, workers and their dependants are left destitute because they cannot claim for injury on duty or work place acquired diseases from NSSA. Casual workers are in a worse off situation and cannot afford to join private insurance schemes due to the low wages. Therefore, most casual workers are unprotected and vulnerable workers. In addition, due to the high rise of casual work among workers, most women casual workers do not enjoy maternity benefits as their contracts of employment do not meet the conditions in the Labour Act. Getting pregnant is synonymous to non-renewal of employment contract and they are usually not entitled to maternity leave benefits as prescribed by the Labour Act and the Constitution. The majority of women are often interrupted from their working lives due to family responsibilities and pregnancy and hence have very little chances of contribution to national social security funds thereby exposing themselves to high poverty risks in future compared men.

Furthermore, the growing informal economy workers and domestic workers are currently not covered in the national pension schemes. However, through advocacy and engagement by the ZCTU and the Zimbabwe Chamber of the Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), NSSA is now in the process of developing informal economy-friendly national social security so as to include them in the formal social security system. The development of the Ministry of SMEs' Strategy on Formalising the Informal Economy also provides the ZCTU and ZCIEA with the opportunity to participate in the dialogues and shape the design of suitable schemes for the informal economy.

3.4 Social Dialogue Pillar

The politico-socio-economic environment has had a detrimental effect on social dialogue both at bilateral and tripartite levels. A study undertaken by LEDRIZ in 2015 revealed that effective social dialogue at bipartite was being undermined by the following:

- ✓ Failure to amend the Labour Act in totality;
- ✓ Promotion of multiplicity of trade unions in one sector by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare thus making it difficult to identify which union to approach when negotiation process begins. As a result, employers choose to register an agreement with the union offering lower wage increases.
- ✓ Some government officials and Members of Parliament were now employers and have power to influence negotiation process to the disadvantage of workers;
- ✓ Change of conditions for registering CBA by the Ministry of Labour. For example, a union cannot register a CBA without giving justification. Therefore, workers end up not enjoying any improvements in wages or benefits;
- ✓ Deliberate sabotage of trade unions by the employers who do not remit trade union dues to the union or submit pension funds to NSSA;
- ✓ Militarisation some sectors such as parastatals where security agents are sometimes employed thus affecting negotiation processes. A particular case cited was the railways sector;
- ✓ Abuse of the Indigenization and Empowerment Policy as indigenous employers are reluctant to comply with labour laws or CBA provisions as they feel they are protected by the policy;
- ✓ Refusal, delays and non-compliance by employers to award NEC agreed wage increases;
- ✓ Delegation of managers to NEC negotiations who do not have mandate for negotiations and are unable to make concrete decisions;
- ✓ Division among employers as some companies are performing well whilst others are struggling to survive;
- ✓ Preference by employers to pay lawyers than honouring awards;

- ✓ Application of delay tactics by employers where at times employers do not submit counter positions or they delay responding to the trade union's position papers. The NEC regulations provides that both parties (employers and employees) should submit their position papers well on time to allow both parties to come to the table on an informed position;
- ✓ Influence of Chinese employers backed by the government who refuse to comply with national labour laws and CBA outcomes;
- ✓ Exercise of rigidity which eventually leads to deadlocks or reference of cases for arbitration and applications for exemptions where agreements have been reached, thus rendering collective bargaining dysfunctional; and,
- ✓ Abuse of the dispute resolution mechanisms.

At tripartite level, the absence of structured and sustained Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) meetings (Government, Business and Labour) has rendered TNF dysfunctional. In addition, there is limited willingness and readiness by the government to consult, negotiate in good faith and share information.

4. Other specific challenges inhibiting achievement of the broader SDGs

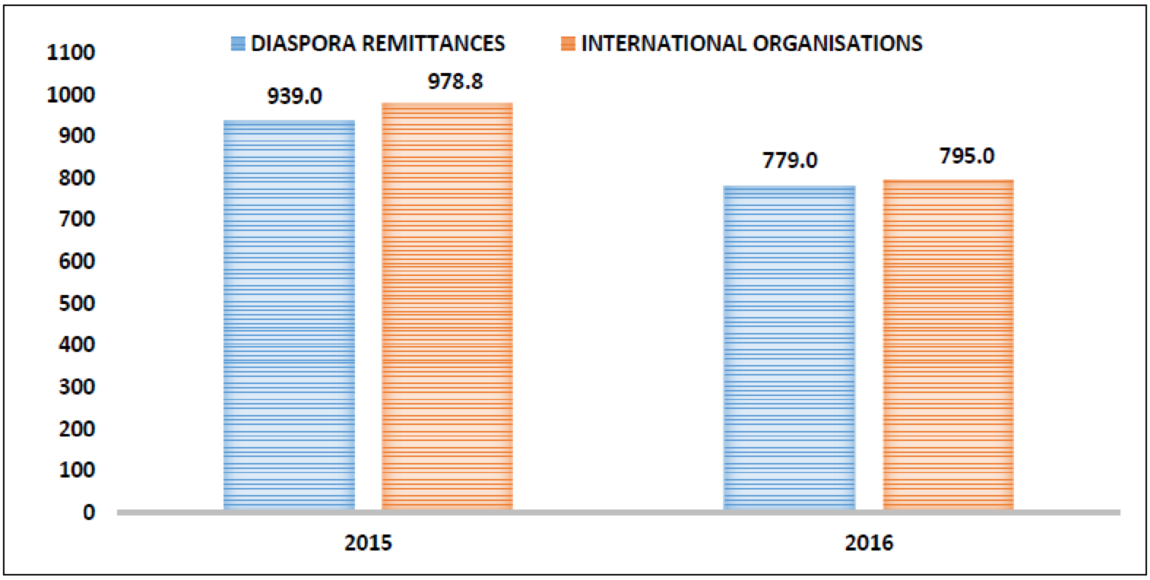
4.1 Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)

Illicit financial flows (IFFs) have been haemorrhaging the economy and has gone unresolved and yet plugging IFFs unlocks domestic resources that can be used to finance implementation of SDGs. IFFs generally refers to cross-border movement of capital associated with illegal activity. In 2015, U$1.2 billion (about 33% exports!!) was externalized by companies in the form of export proceeds, high management and expert fees. On the other hand, the RBZ 2016 data indicated that the country lost an average of US$150 million every month of 2015. Similarly, AFRODAD estimated that Zimbabwe lost US$2.83billion between 2009 and 2013, through illicit flows, translating to about US$570.75 million a year. Economic transformation requires "a plugging the leakages approach" to mitigate against the export of liquidity through illicit financial flows, trade mispricing, among others. Such financial leakages represents missed opportunities to achieve SDGs which include basic social and economic development objectives (food security, health, education, water and sanitation and employment creation).

4.2 Declining Remittances

Historically, especially since the hyperinflation period of 2008, remittances have been a major source of revenue for the government and more importantly a source of social protection (SDG 8) for the majority of the citizens as people received remittances from their family members and relatives in the diaspora. The RBZ Governor noted that more recently, remittances have been a major source of import financing. Figure 4 shows the trend between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 4: Trend in Remittances, 2015-16



Source: RBZ

Figure 4 reveal that remittances declined by 17% between 2015 and 2016, partly due to poor performance of global economy, appreciation of the US dollar against the other source currencies, especially the South African rand and preferences to send remittances in kind. Decline in remittances means that the country is not only loosing monetary gains, but resources critical for human development outcomes across a number of areas such as health, education, among others, for remittance-receiving households.

4.3 Poor competitiveness indicators undermining investment and Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs)

As indicated in Figure 5, Zimbabwe continues to perform poorly in all the competitiveness indicators thus stifling private sector investment and FDIs.

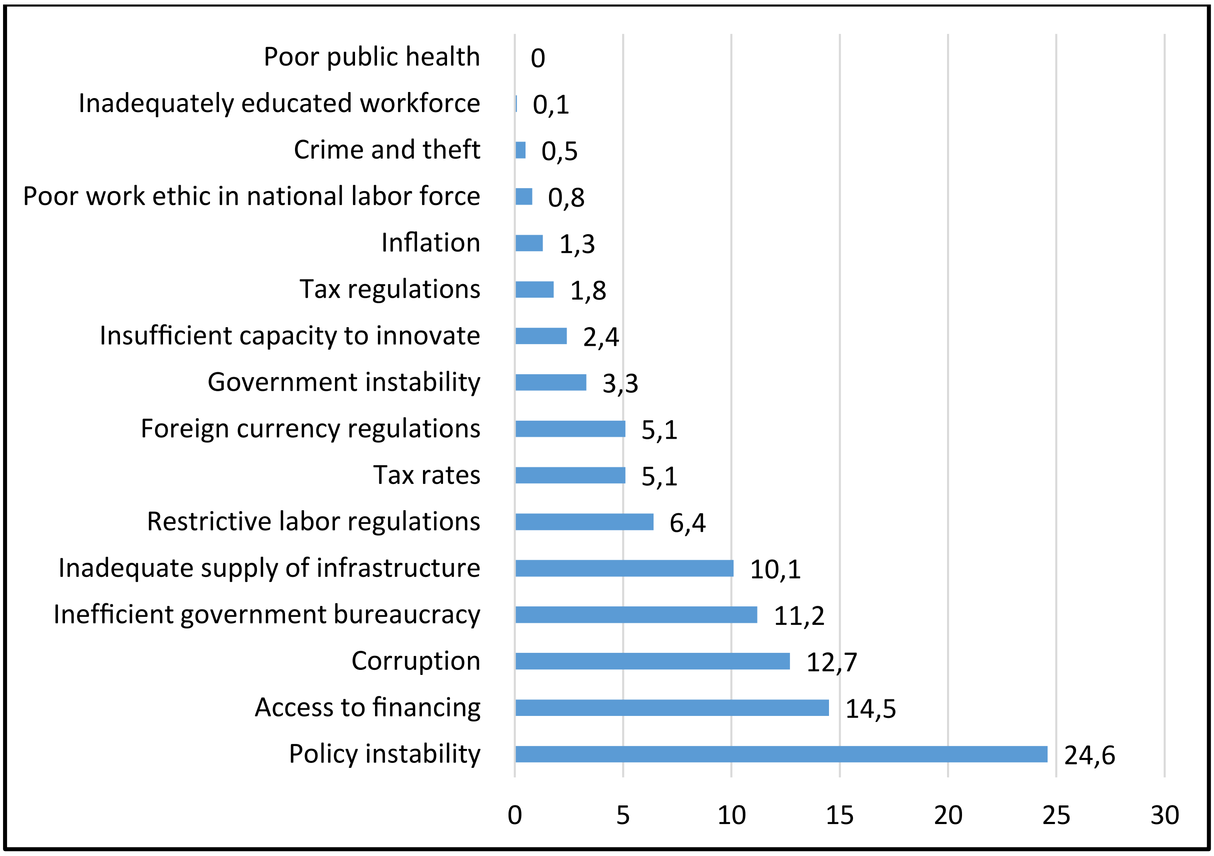
Figure 5: Zimbabwe Competitiveness Indicators

Period	WEF Global Competitiveness	WB Ease of Doing Business	Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom	Transparency-International Corruptoion Perception
2007/08	129/131	154/183		150/179
2008/09	118/121	160/183	145/147	166/180
2009/10	132/134	156/183	175/179	146/180
2010/11	136/139	157/183	178/179	134/178
2011/12	132/142	170/183	175/177	154/183
2012/13	132/144	172/185	175/184	163/176
2013/14	131/148	170/189	176/178	157/177
2014/15	124/144	171/189	175/178	150/168
2015/16	125/138	155/189	175/178	125/140
2016/17	126/138	161/190		154/176

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report (2016/17)

The major constraints undermining competitiveness and doing business in Zimbabwe are shown in Figure 6. The top 5 major constraints include policy instability, access to financing, corruption, inefficient government bureaucracy, inadequate supply of infrastructure, respectively.

Figure 6: Major constraints undermining doing business and competitiveness in Zimbabwe



Source: World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report (2016/17)

Worryingly, the government is concentrating in dealing with the soft factors such as female participation in labour force, professional management, quality of education system, neglecting the addressing the hard factors (corruption, number of days to start a business, property rights, supply side constraints) which are the very essence of economic structural transformation and socio-economic development.

4.4 Unbudgeted and unsustainable expenditures undermining capital investments in socio-economic sectors

Over the past decade, economic growth has been stifled by unbudgeted expenditures coupled by unsustainable government wage bill. Unbudgeted expenditures explained by the increased size of the Public Service from 203,362 in February 2009 to 276,163 by December 2014, a 35.8% growth rate, despite policy of a general freeze on recruitment introduced by Government in 2011. In addition, the drought related grain importation of US$253.5 million; December 2015 salary payment arrears of US$119.4 million; debt servicing of US$100.9 million; and bonus payments for 2015 of US$177.8 million which spilled into 2016 further cripples economic development. On the other hand, employment costs consume 91% of total revenues undermining investments in socio-economic infrastructure and achievements of socio-economic rights. For instance, the 2017 national budget of US$4.1 billion, employment costs took up US$3 billion, leaving only US$400 million for current operations, and US$180 million for debt service, out of the overall proposal for recurrent expenditures of US$3.58 billion (87%). Thus, there is serious need for Public Service Wage Bill rationalisation measures so that more resources are unlocked for financing fulfilment and enjoyment of socio-economic rights by citizens.

4.5 Lack of sustained pro-poor National Budgets

The top 3 recipients of budgetary resources in the 2017 National Budget were (i) Primary and secondary education with 19.6% of budget allocation (6.4 per cent of GDP); (ii) Home affairs with 8.9% (2.9 per cent of GDP); and, Defence with 8.3% (2.7 per cent of GDP). However, 98.2% of the primary and secondary education budget was geared towards employment costs, leaving a meagre allocation for education provisions.

The right to food security (SDG 2)– in the 2017 National Budget, agriculture sector allocation was US$291.6 million (7.1% of the budget) which is lower than the Maputo Declaration requiring 10% of the budget be spent on agriculture. The climate change effects (extreme rainfall patterns, cyclones) in 2016/17 may undermine food production which will in turn threaten the right to food security.

The right to health (SDG 3) – A total of 6.9% of the 2017 National Budget (2 per cent of GDP) was allocated to health against the Abuja Declaration of 15%. Unfortunately, of the 6.9%, about 79.1% was for remuneration of public health care personnel; 10.5% for operations and maintenance and 10.5% for capital expenditures. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), countries such as Malawi, Rwanda, Madagascar, Togo, and Zambia have managed to reach the Abuja target with Rwanda spending 23% of their budget on health care in 2015. The average health allocation for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is 11.3%. Worryingly, per capita health allocation stood at a meagre US$21 in 2017, down from US$24 in 2016, lower than the SADC average of US$146, US$650 for South Africa, US$200 for Angola and US$90 for Zambia. Such meagre allocations undermine the right of citizens to enjoy this right especially given that more than 11 million Zimbabweans, representing 82% percent of the population have no access to medical aid. Introduction of a health fund levy of 5 cents for every dollar of airtime and mobile data, under the theme, 'Talk-Surf and Save a Life' in the 2017 National Budget require transparency and accountability otherwise the fund will not effectively achieve its intended outcomes. In fact, health care since 2000 is depended on external funding, an unsustainable situation especially if the donors decide to pull put unexpectedly.

The right to education (SDG 4)- Primary and Secondary Education was allocated 19.6%, of which the bulk of it 98.2% was allocated towards employment costs, 1.8% towards schools' operational requirements, 0.2% towards procurement of teaching and learning materials, including assistive learning devices for learners with disabilities and 0.5% towards infrastructural development across satellite schools. The Dakar Declaration requires that 20% of the budget be spent on education. It is clear that in 2017 service provision will be greatly undermined.

The right to housing (SDGs 9 and 11) – the housing backlog stood at 1,25 million people in 2013, a figure which has increased over the years. Unfortunately, the 2017 budget allocated only 1,4% to housing, yet 70% of the housing infrastructure development is supposed to be funded by budget allocation. With the emerging "ruralisation of the urban areas" (lack of piped water and electricity), the 2017 budget allocation failed expectations.

The right to social protection (SDG 8) – the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare budget allocation was only 5.7%. Of this, only 11% is towards social protection. Given the increased poverty levels induced by the fragile economy, there is more need for high budget allocation. The existing social protection programmes have not complemented by provision of other basic socio-economic rights such as education, water and sanitation, among others, leaving more people falling into poverty and unable to enjoy socio-economic rights. In addition, with climate change, demand for climate change-sensitive social protection schemes (floods, cyclones, extreme temperatures) increases.

The right to decent work (SDG 8) – the increased informalisation of work (casual, contract, part-time jobs) is associated with lack of workers' rights and social security, job insecurity and income security all which undermines the attainment of other socio-economic rights mentioned above. Indecent work equates to inability to fully enjoy socio-economic rights.

5. Opportunities for effective SDG implementation

There exists a number of opportunities that trade unions can utilise to effectively and meaningfully participate in SDG national dialogues and processes. In Zimbabwe, a number of policy frameworks provide space for trade unions to influence and shape the developmental trajectory in Zimbabwe and advance their interests. Below are some of the policy frameworks and tools that exist:

5.1 Decent Work Country Programme for Zimbabwe (DWCP-Z)

Zimbabwe has so far developed three Generations of DWCP-Z since 2005, with the 3rd Generation of DWCP-Z cover the period to 2017. The upcoming fourth Generation of the DWCP-Z provides a huge scope to influence prioritise the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs related to them. Although implementation of the past DWCP-Zs has been poor, the DWCPs-Z have played a significant role in promoting and stimulating social dialogue among the social partners (government, business and labour). They have also been very instrumental in revitalizing social dialogue mechanisms and structures in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the fourth DWCP-Z presents an opportunity to reinforce the Decent Work Agenda through SDG 8 which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" and other related SDGs since a number of SDGs interlink with the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda.

Furthermore, it is important that the upcoming DWCP-Z integrates the ILO's Future of Work (FoW) initiative, launched at the 104th International Labour Conference (ILC) which focusses on four major areas namely; work and society, decent jobs, the organization of work, and production and the governance of work. The FoW emphasises the need for social partners to understand and to respond effectively to ongoing changes in the world of work. Thus, it is also vital for the ILO Office to provide the technical expertise and guide the government, workers and employers to better tackle the world of work challenges in the preparatory process towards development of the new DWCP-Z in order to make it as comprehensive as possible.

5.2 Participation of ZCTU in National Development Plans

The government has initiated a process of development of phase 2 of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). Therefore, the ZCTU has to demand from the government its space to be included in the formulation and design of ZIMASSET 2 so that it can influence infusion of decent work and related SDGs into national development plan.

5.3 Riding on the SDGs principle of leaving no one behind

The globally accepted key SDGs principle of *leaving no one behind* provides ZCTU with a tool to demand space and inclusion in the national SDGs processes. Already, the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion has institutionalised multi-stakeholder committees for consultation and implementation of the SDGs, thus providing the trade unions and workers an entry point to engage the government, influence processes and to boost accountability of the government and other actors such as the private sector in fulfilling the SDGs.

5.4 Climate change, Green Economy and Green Jobs Initiatives

The government is already seized with addressing climate change issues and embarrassing the green economy initiatives. In addition, the government is the process of adopting the Renewable Energy Policy for Zimbabwe, thus providing opportunities for trade unions engagement with the government on creation green and decent jobs pertinent to labour especially in the context of high unemployment especially among the youths and women. In addition, trade unions have the opportunity to integrate climate change and green and decent jobs in sectoral collective bargaining processes.

6. Future Prospects

6.1 At national level

Going forward, on the economic side, the 2017 national budget was clear of the structural reforms required for economic transformation. These include:

i. Re-orienting fiscal resources towards developmental programmes;
ii. Strengthening interventions to stimulate production and supply across the various sectors;
iii. Finalising the outstanding components of the re-engagement process with international financial institutions;
iv. Entrenching structural reforms to improve the domestic business and investment environment, vital for restoration of confidence, lowering the ease and cost of doing business and product competitiveness; and
v. Supporting implementation of poverty reduction programmes and projects highlighted in the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) (2016-2018) and the National SDG Position Paper.

Absence of economic reforms equates to entrenched economic paralysis and the inability to achieve the SDGs. These reforms are the very basis for economic recovery and thus need to be taken with utmost priority and unlocking resources that can be geared towards SDG implementation.

On the other hand, trade unions and other non-state actors need to amplify their voices and establish a rallying point for bringing all non-state actors across the political and civil society divide to address the political, social and economic challenges the country is facing that can undermine progress towards achieving the SDGs and decent work. Advocacy and engagement on the following is required:

i. The implementation of the above structural reforms;
ii. Measures to plug illicit financial flows;
iii. Addressing existing culture of corruption with impunity that has become widespread, haemorrhaging the economy. For instance, addressing the issue of the missing US$15billion from diamond revenues;
iv. Refocusing and prioritisation of fiscal expenditures (budget allocations) towards Ministries responsible for thematic SDGs Ministries of Health and Child Care, Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development among others so as promote pro-people and humane development;
v. The commitment by the government to implement the AFRICAN Instruments to which it signed which include the Maputo Declaration (allocating 10% of the budget towards agriculture); The Abuja Declaration (allocating 15% of the budget towards health sector); and the Dakar Declaration(allocating 20% of the national budget to education);
vi. Need for a Social Contract and Implementation of Agreed Positions of Kadoma Declaration and TNF; and,
vii. Opening up the national processes to broader stakeholder participation on economic development policy processes such as the intended re-engagement with international community and development of a full IPRSP, among others.

6.2 At Trade Union Level

i. Evidence-based research, analysis and monitoring

Given the long period (15 years) of implementation of the SDG it is critical for trade unions to prioritise evidence-based research and analysis. The research findings will be used to equip trade unions and workers to influence national processes from a well-informed position. The research findings can also be used to develop trade union SDG-shadow reports (SDG country profile) for engagement at various national level. The initial step of developing the trade union shadow report was undertaken by LEDRIZ in 2017 under the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN - ITUC). This report was shared with the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion and CSOs present at the SDGs High Level Political Forum (HLPF) that took place in July 2017 in New York. There was high appreciation of shadow report from the recipients. The ZCTU President also posted the Trade Union SDG country Profile on the various ZCTU WhatsApp Groups.

Furthermore, it is critical to continuously undertake analysis of national blueprints such as National Budgets and Monetary Policy Statements and the extent to which they address progress towards achieving SDGs and decent work in general. The research findings, analysis and monitoring reports should also inform the trade unions organising and recruitment; and education and training programmes.

ii. Education, Training and Mobilisation

The SDGs discourse and its linkage with the decent work agenda is relatively new to most of the workers. It is therefore essential for trade unions to strengthen SDG–literacy and knowledge capacities as well as integrating these in the existing education and training programmes on socio-economic rights and the decent work agenda for ZCTU and its structures. This needs to be complimented by development of popular version materials pamphlets, flyers among others and use of the various existing social media platforms of ZCTU and affiliates to raise awareness and create a culture of decent work and SDGs demand from the grassroots level.

iii. Advocacy, Engagement and Alliance Building

There is need to undertake the following:

- ✓ Identify allies at a national level who can support our cause on SDGs;
- ✓ Establishment of collaboration and partnerships with progressive and pro-labour academia, human rights institutions, like-minded CSOs (women and gender based groups, youths, faith based, community leaders, among others.
- ✓ Provide national budget inputs to the Ministry of Finance which have workers perspectives on SDGs and decent work in general;
- ✓ Participate in the existing committees of the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion and any reference groups or oversight mechanisms;
- ✓ Engage the Parliamentarians to be more responsible for SGDs implementation.