



UN Country Team Message on World Humanitarian Day #TheHumanRace

In the race against the climate crisis, we can't leave anyone behind

19 August 2021, Harare - The 2021 World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is dedicated to highlighting the human cost of the climate crisis. The climate crisis doesn't affect everyone equally. People in vulnerable situations are already losing their lives, homes, and livelihoods. Time is running out for millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

The 2021 WHD, with a hashtag **#TheHumanRace** campaign, is a clarion call against the climate crisis clock. The UN Country Team calls on all people in Zimbabwe to join the race and participate in the Call to Action using **#TheHumanRace** on their social media handles.

The **United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** report published in August 2021 highlighted the link between human-induced climate change and extreme climactic events being experienced in every region across the planet. Human induced climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of heat waves, heavy precipitation in some regions and droughts in others, as well as rising sea levels and melting glaciers to name a few examples.

Without adopting rapid climate informed development programmes, the commitment made by 193 UN Member States to attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not materialize.

Like most countries on the planet, Zimbabwe has experienced the harmful impact of climate shocks including consecutive severe droughts, floods and an increased occurrence of cyclones such as Idai in 2019. The impacts are felt first and foremost through water, impacting basic human rights and livelihoods. In 2019, some 270,000 people's access to safe water and sanitation were negatively impacted by Cyclone Idai while drought put an additional 775,000 people's water and sanitation at risk. The impact on Zimbabwe's agricultural sector which is vulnerable to climate change have been significant. Agricultural production remains largely rain-fed and dominated by a single crop, maize. Crop and livestock production represent more than half of the total income earned by rural households. Women are disproportionately affected by climactic shocks as they constitute 61% of the farmers and provide 70% of the labor – mostly unpaid family workers.

Safeguarding food security and ending hunger are therefore fundamental priorities in Zimbabwe. So too, is the active **engagement of the youth** to lead the way through green- innovation and green-creation. **Building resilience** in the agricultural sector through strengthening the linkages between humanitarian as well as development responses remains critical. Foreign direct investment as well as domestic private finance and investment are important sources of climate finance. A mix of public and private sources of finance will be needed to implement the climate adaptation and mitigation measures outlined in the country's **Nationally Determined Contribution**.

The United Nations in Zimbabwe has supported initiatives and projects to respond to climate change, provide basic services and cushion livelihoods. More specifically, the United Nations has:

- Assisted some 1.1 million people in 23 districts prone to recurrent natural disasters with various **resilience building projects** including in climate smart agriculture and business.
- Assisted approximately 138,255 people in eight cyclone-prone districts to put climate risk management plans in place and bolster environmental protection, including to protect safe drinking water.
- Assisted small-scale farmers to diversify away from maize and to **cultivate diverse and drought resistant** crops such as sorghum, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, and beans. Diversifying crop production helps to strengthen capacity and ensure environmental protection through maintenance of soil nutrients. In addition, farmers have been supported to adopt climate smart agriculture including drip irrigation to optimize usage of limited water resources, and weather information systems for collecting data and predicting weather patterns.
- Supported the development and roll out of key policies such as: the forthcoming **National Adaptation Plan, National Environmental Policy and National Climate Policy** in order to strengthen the enabling policy environment in Zimbabwe and to review the country's progress on its commitment to the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**.

The United Nations in Zimbabwe recognizes the need to do more to tackle the looming climate crises with a sense of urgency that it deserves. Under its forthcoming five-year United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022-2026), the United Nations will continue to prioritize as one of its four key priorities, programmes aimed at ensuring greater environmental stability and robust food, water, and sanitation systems in support of healthy lives and equitable, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods.

To win the race against the looming climate emergency, as the UN Secretary General, Mr Antonio Guterres said, "Let's lace up our running shoes, join #TheHumanRace campaign, and together, make sure everyone reaches the finish line." END

About World Humanitarian Day

On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Five years later, the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/63/L.49 designating 19 August as WHD. Each year, WHD focuses on a theme, bringing together partners from across the humanitarian system to advocate for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises, and for the safety and security of aid workers.

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