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REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

# ZAMBIA'S REPORT FOR THE THIRD MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION, 10TH MAY TO 16TH MAY 2003, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA.

**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

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| AIDS | Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome |
| CSO | Central Statistical Office |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HIV | Human Deficiency-deficiency Virus |
| ICTs | Information Communication Technologies |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGOs | Non Governmental Organizations |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |
| TNDP | Transitional National Development Plan |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| SDI | Spatial Data Infrastructure |
| AFREF | Africa Reference Frame |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme |

**Executive Summary**

Zambia presents her report to the third meeting of the Committee On Development Information of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on Information and Governance.

E-governance is a tool for Governments to use new technologies to provide people with more convenient access to government information and services, to improve quality of service and provide opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes of governing a nation. It also provides opportunities to move forward in the 21st century with high quality, cost effective government services delivery and the creation of better relationships between the people and government

Zambia presently is in the process of formulating a national policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to foster and guide the use of ICT development in the country; however the in absence of ICT policy, ICTs are regulated by the Telecommunication Act of 1994 of the Laws of Zambia

The Zambia Telecommunications Company Limited (ZAMTEL), which administers PSTN in Zambia, was established in 1994 through an Act of Parliament. This followed a separation of the postal and telecommunications services under the postal and Telecommunications Corporation.

The Country has three mobile telephone service providers. Zamtel providers an analogue telephone system based on the AMPS technology with an installed subscriber base of 10,000 but currently the entire exchange network is undergoing digitalisation in preparation for the introduction of GSM while TELECEL and CELTEL provide a GSM system with a combined subscriber base of about 139,092.

In 1994, Zambia became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa (outside South Africa) to have full Internet access. The first ISP, ZAMNET is owned by the University of Zambia. The Communications Authority has since licensed five others. These are Coppernet, Microlink, UUNET, Zamtel and Celtel. The number of combined subscriber base is currently at 11, 647 and is expected to increase tremendously in the next two years.

Following the return to multi-party politics in 1991, the Government embarked on various policy reforms and initiatives, all aimed at harnessing the full potential of the ICT revolution. Among these have been the liberalisation and deregulation of the telecommunications sector, the liberalisation of the airwaves and formation of the Communications Authority, which regulates the telecommunications sector.

The Government has constituted a National Technical Committee comprising experts from government and the private sector. The Committee commenced its work in November 2002 under the following terms of reference:

- To provide guidelines and supervise the preparation of an ICT policy framework, policy itself, and strategies and action plans;
- To provide input for the pilot project, initiate and undertake ongoing evaluation;

- To work out programmes to facilitate the creation of a digital society through ICT infrastructure, education and training, and human resources development as primary focus in ICT policy development; and
- To organise a national forum for the discussion and validation of the draft policy document.

The vision of Government on ICT is to *make ICT the engine for economic growth and social economic development in Zambia.* It has been recognised that the association between telecommunications and the wholesale changes brought about in the global socio-economic system as a result of the information society has rendered credence to the following:

- That economic growth is directly linked to levels of telecommunications and digital infrastructure;
- That the intangibility of the information resource levels the playing field for corporations, governments, and communities around the world;
- That a "new economy" has emerged that in fundamental ways supplants what went on before; in this economy, information means money;
- That information flows have "opened" otherwise closed or insular countries and that this opening has furthered prospects of democracy in these politics; and
- That developing countries must get on the path to an information society or they soon will fall by the wayside of the digital divide.

The issue of good Governance cannot be discussed in isolation but together with other factors that help in the achievement of a society that promotes democratic principles. One such element is the provision of timely, relevant and reliable statistics that enhance informed and accurate decision making, at Government, community and private sector levels. Policy reforms aimed at democratization must use population statistics to ensure equal representation in our national political system. Policy reforms on economic liberalization must include the use of statistics on vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, and the elderly etc who must be cushioned from the adverse effects of economic reforms.

One area that directly illustrates the link between statistics and good governance is that of the Population Census and how it relates to issues of the electoral system. Firstly, any electoral victory for any political party depends on the numbers and also the population distribution. The Census is one of the few statistical systems that provide data at sub-district level and therefore has spatial implications for governance. On the other hand, the electoral system also depends on the demarcations of constituency and ward levels, as the case is Zambia. One of the challenges in Zambia has been the harmonisation of the statistical frame for data collection and the electoral demarcations of constituencies and wards. Politicians at both ward and constituency levels need statistics for the decision making process that is guided by existing statistical indicators that support politicians in advocacy activities and in resource mobilisation. The current production of statistical data and indicators at both constituency and ward levels has provided a tool for politicians and civil society to advocate for a system of resource allocations that takes into account statistical representations. For example, the Zambian situation has seen increased demand from politicians and civil society for statistical information that is representative of local communities and the Population Census is probably the only

reliable system that is able to provide data at that lower level. This has exerted great pressure on the ability of the national statistical system to provide information at that lower level.

The development of ICT in Zambia has created great challenges on how statistical information is collected, processed and disseminated. Apart from the increased use of local area networks (LAN) in statistical operations, there is currently great need to expand such networks to enable remote regional statistical offices access huge data sets using data warehouses that have harmonised data from various data sources. The approval of the Decentralisation Policy by Cabinet in 2003 has brought challenges for regional statistical offices to provide statistical data for local area planning in line with the Transitional National Development Plans (TNDP). In Zambia, the Central Statistical Office is in the process of developing a wider area network (WAN) that enables remote regional statistical office access data for local level planning and dissemination activities.

In 2002 the CSO engaged services of consultants to help develop a 5-year strategic plan aimed at improving the operations of the office. This Strategic Plan was designed for the Zambia National Statistical System focusing on the Central Statistical Office to halt the decline in provision of official statistics and to lay a basis for a more efficient statistical system and service capable of meeting the information needs for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP), and other national development initiatives.

Government has approved the establishment of a National Remote Sensing Centre to coordinate activities in the application of GIS/Remote Sensing in Zambia.

Remote Sensing technologies are some of the tools that have been used in Zambia for sometime now. The Zambia Association for Geographical Information Systems (ZAGIS) has been spearheading activities in this area as a professional organisation.

Development and dissemination of geo-information is very important for any country's economic development and growth. This is because well-developed geo-information infrastructure greatly helps in high-level decision-making process. It is a process that should be supported by National governments as well as regional and global bodies.

In Zambia we have a forum of core network stakeholders in the development of a national standard for digital topographic databases as part of the national spatial database infrastructure development. This is the EINMS (Environmental Information Network and Monitoring System) Forum that is composed of, among other organization, Zambia Survey Department, Forestry Department, Zambia Wildlife Authority, Mine safety Department, Soil Survey Unit (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Lusaka City Council and Central Statistical Office. This forum is very strategic in the development and dissemination of geo-information. With long-term financial support from government and cooperating partners the forum can transform the current underdeveloped geo-information scenario in Zambia to an advanced and well-managed geo information powerhouse in the region.

The Survey Department is currently compiling the Digital topographic database at scale 1:50,000 and 1:100,000 with the ambition of covering the whole country. 150 map sheets were compiled with the financial and consultancy support of ESP (Environmental Support Programme) of them Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources and Swede Survey AB of Sweden. While 70 more sheets have been capture in the on going Zambia Survey Department daily core activities. This brings the total number to 220 sheets out of 826 sheets or 26% of the whole country coverage.

26% of the work has been done, capacity has also been built in Zambia Survey Department which only requires to be fully improved, by way of financial support from government of other cooperating partners, to the level where it could speed up the process of developing spatial data base for contribution to wards the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. This is an opportunity that needs to be exploited if an efficient NSDI is to become a reality in Zambia.

Zambia is amongst the first countries in southern and central Africa to host a continuous GPS tracking station connected to the IGS international points. This station is located in Lusaka. However, there are plans to establish two more stations at Ndola and Mongu when equipment and other auxiliary resources permit.

The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources has been implementing the Environmental Support Programme. One of the components has been developing Information Systems focusing on addressing, deforestation, poor water and sanitation, land degradation (desertification), Industrial air pollution (mainly from mining activities), and wildlife depletion.

The Zambia Meteorological Department is currently executing a project called RANET. RANET is an acronym for *Radio and Internet.* It involves the use of a small digital radio (World Space digital receiver) operating on "L" band and capable of accessing the Internet signal to receive data and information in rural settlements, and transmitting the same messages in local languages to rural communities within 40-60 km radius. Such information technologies are designed to, among other things, improve infrastructure of delivering weather and climate data and information, as well as other developmental information to rural communities.