

Project Management Update from Zimbabwe¹



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Zimbabwe Government Launches new 2021-25 Economic Development Blueprint:

The Government of Zimbabwe has recently launched a new Economic Development plan that will run in 2 phases from 2021 to 2025 and phase 2 2026 to 2030. The phase 1 development plan dubbed NDS 1 (National Development Plan 1) has already been published and will take off from 1 January 2020.

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has implemented several economic blueprints aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth, development and poverty alleviation.

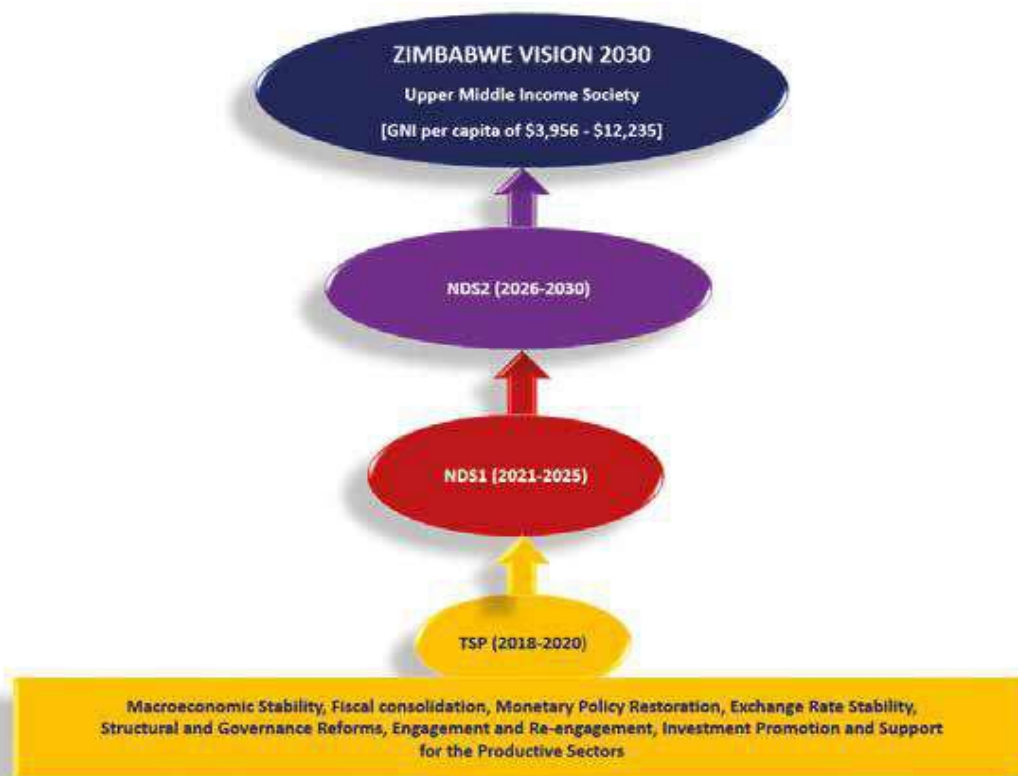
Through the implementation of these blueprints, Zimbabwe managed to transform itself to the current levels of development. However, the development results achieved have not been strong enough to spur the economy to expected levels of sustainable economic development due to both exogenous and endogenous factors.

The ushering in of the New Dispensation in November 2017 saw the launch of Vision 2030 to chart Zimbabwe's new development trajectory. The Vision reflects the collective aspirations and determination of the people of Zimbabwe to achieve a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle Income Society by 2030. As spelt out in Vision 2030, achieving a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle Income Society will depend on the formulation and implementation

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of bold and robust policies as well as other interventions that Government will undertake through Short and Medium-Term National Development Plans.

Figure 1 below shows the road map to the realisation of the aspirations of Vision 2030.



Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP)

The TSP (October 2018-December 2020) was implemented as a first step of a three-phase process to attain the country’s Vision 2030 outcomes. The TSP sought to strengthen key priorities that form the foundation for the implementation of Medium-Term Plans. The TSP was aimed at stabilising the macro-economy and the financial sector, introducing necessary policy and institutional reforms to transform the economy to a private sector led economy, as well as launching quick-wins to stimulate growth. Further, the TSP was crafted to deal with distortions and challenges that would retard growth of the economy in the long run. These include persistent and unsustainable budget deficits, inflationary pressures, uncontrolled domestic borrowing and unsustainable debt levels.

These distortions and challenges hindered Government efforts to come up with a long-term development strategy, since sustained macro-economic stability is a prerequisite to long term National Development Planning and implementation. Significant progress was made in the implementation of the TSP across various Pillars. These include fiscal consolidation, restoration of monetary policy, stabilisation of the exchange rate, the undertaking of governance and institutional reforms, entrenched engagement and re-engagement with the international

community, facilitation of investment and infrastructure development. Fiscal consolidation during the TSP was achieved through expenditure containment measures as well as limiting recourse to the Central Bank overdraft. During the TSP period, Treasury Bills (TBs) were only issued within the framework of the Budget. In addition, Government managed to contain the Public Wage Bill to below 50% of Government Revenue. Additionally, the Zimbabwean dollar was re-introduced. Exchange rate stabilisation was also successfully achieved through the implementation of the foreign currency auction system.

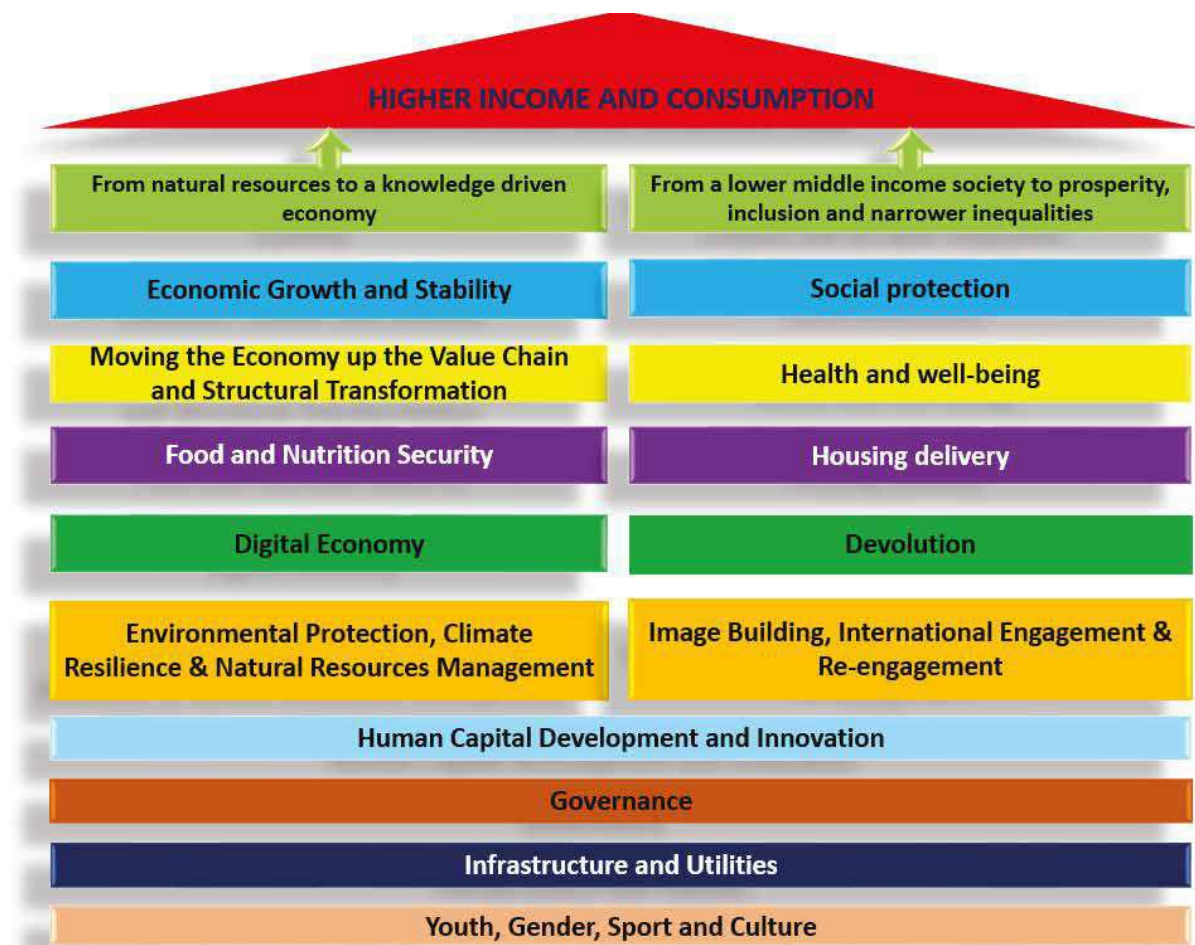
Thrust of the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025

The National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS1) is the successor to the TSP and is the first 5-year Medium Term Plan aimed at realising the country's Vision 2030. The Strategy will build on the successes realised by the TSP as well as addressing its challenges, particularly the unfinished efforts in the area of macroeconomic stability and growth. The NDS1 outlines the strategies, policies, legal and institutional reforms and the programmes and projects that will be implemented over the five-year period, 2021-2025, to achieve accelerated, high, inclusive, broad based and sustainable economic growth as well as socio-economic transformation and development. Through the broad based stakeholder consultative process, the following 14 National Priorities were identified:-

Economic Growth and Stability; Food and Nutrition Security; Governance; Moving the Economy up the Value Chain & Structural Transformation; Human Capital Development; Environmental Protection, Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management; Housing Delivery; Digital Economy; Health and Well-being; Infrastructure & Utilities; Image Building and International Engagement and Re-engagement; Social Protection; Youth, Sport and Culture; and Devolution. These National Priorities were crafted taking into consideration the TSP Mid-Term Review, Vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa Agenda 2063, SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) as well as provincial and district profiles.

Implementation of programmes, policies and interventions to realise these priorities will transform the Zimbabwean economy from a natural resource economy to a knowledge driven economy. This will also move the country from a lower middle income society towards an upper middle income society.

Figure 2: NDS1 Pathways of change towards Vision 2030



In order to enhance coordination and implementation of programmes and projects, central to the realisation of the NDS1 targeted results, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy will be through Thematic Working Groups (ThWGs) as part of the consultative process. The attainment of the targets of Vision 2030 from the current baseline requires the country to re-invigorate and re-orient itself towards a transformative agenda of Managing for Development Results (MfDR). MfDR emphasises on achievement of results that positively impact on the economy and people’s livelihoods.

To this end, NDS1 is underpinned by the IRBM system. IRBM inculcates a culture of high performance, quality service delivery, measurement, goal clarity, continuous improvement and accountability across the public sector. In this regard, Government, for the first time in the history of crafting national blueprints, designed National and Sectoral Results Frameworks to systematically guide the formulation and implementation process of the NDS1. The frameworks allowed Government to define National Priorities, Key Result Areas, National Outcomes, Key Performance Indicators, and Targets among other parameters. This framework was replicated at

Sectoral Level in order to allow for creation of strong linkages with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), where the implementation of Programmes, Projects and other interventions take place. The Programmes, Projects and other interventions, which are key components of this Strategy, as outlined in all the following Chapters of the blueprint, will be supported in the National Budget through the Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) System, which Government has adopted for all MDAs. This process will fully integrate National Planning and National Budgeting in line with IRBM principles

This Strategy, therefore, requires acceleration and intensification of the implementation of ICT systems in both the public and private sectors. These institutional and systems reform measures will be accompanied by a strengthening of the Personnel Performance System (PPS) in order to change the mindset of public officials and imbue them with a market facing culture characterised by servant leadership, patriotism and loyalty.

Government will, therefore, put in place performance management instruments including the introduction of Performance Contracts for Heads of Ministries, Heads of State Enterprises and Parastatals, as well as Heads of Local Authorities.

The implementation of the NDS1 will require a mind-set change and a new way of thinking and doing business. This mind-set change will require public officials and the private sector to think, act and produce desired outcomes and outputs

The above is based on announcements by the Zimbabwe national government and news reports in Zimbabwe media.

About the Author



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Peter Banda is an agile Portfolio Manager with Change Management, Marketing & Project Management Skills, and an accomplished entrepreneur with broad stakeholder management experience. He is a founder member of Zimbabwe's largest Association of Project Managers with a membership of over 4000, Project Management Zimbabwe (PMZ). He has worked in both the private & public sectors during the last 20 years in Zimbabwe, Botswana & South Africa. Peter is a born & passionate teacher, mentor & trainer with skills ranging from Personal Development Planning to Project Management. Peter has presented & published over 30 papers at high profile international conferences & leading newspapers & publications respectively during the last 10 years.

Peter is currently Secretary- General & CEO of PROJECT MANAGEMENT ZIMBABWE (PMZ). Responsibilities cover strategic navigation of PMZ towards the vision covering board advisory and stakeholder management. He was previously a Higher Education Examiner, Facilitator, Lecturer, Curriculum Developer and Assessor for both local and International Diploma and Degree courses for the Zimbabwe Ministry of Higher & Tertiary Education. Peter holds a Bachelors (Hon.) degree and MSc qualification, and is currently studying for a PhD & other certifications. A God-fearing father of 2 lovely daughters & 1 son, Peter likes reading & researching current affairs, coaching others to realise their dreams, and watching soccer & cricket.

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