# Medium and Long-term Economic Planning in Zimbabwe and SADC: Linkages with China's Planning System

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- to analyse and evaluate the impact of policy decisions in the public and private sectors; and
- to coordinate the activities of the various Cabinet committees and their working parties and to establish and administer commissions of inquiry.

The planning function was again moved from the OPC to the newly formed Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. This saw the NEPC incorporated into the Division of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The ministry was involved in the crafting of the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) of 2000, the National Economic Recovery Programme (NERP) of 2003 and the Macroeconomic Policy Framework (2004). NERP was also preceded by the Ten-Point Plan enunciated by President Robert Mugabe to set the tone for a sectoral-driven economic revival growth strategy. The Ten-Point Plan outlined 10 broad objectives meant to give policy directions on the Post-Election Economic Development Strategy and Economic Recovery Programme.

However, six years after its disbandment, in March 2005, the government re-created the planning function in the new Ministry of Economic Development, which was mandated with spearheading the national planning process. The ministry spearheaded the formulation of the National Economic Development Priority Programme (2006) as a short-term government work programme meant to stabilize the economy.

At the formation of the Government of National Unity in 2009, the government launched the Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP I & II) in 2009 and 2010 to stabilise the economy. However, while the STERP programme managed to stabilise the economy, the need for an overarching framework to anchor the budget and other sectoral policy was noted. In this regard, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion resuscitated the consultations to develop a Medium Term Plan for the country in September 2009 and launched in July 2011.

The MTP has provided the overarching macroeconomic framework, priority projects and strategies for the five years, 2011-2015, to guide the development agenda. The MTP has also set sectoral growth targets that underpin the overall growth of the economy. In this regard, all sectoral policies and strategies will focus at achieving these targets.

Thus other line Ministries are expected to formulate sector specific policies which take into account the priority national projects; policy targets and strategies outlined in the MTP. The national budgets are also expected to actualise the objectives of the MTP through the provision of adequate resources to the identified anchor/priority projects.

## 2.3 Overview of national economic policies since 1980

The economic planning landscape in Zimbabwe is guided by a long-term vision, which is implemented through short-term plans and further broken down into annual targets that are implemented through annual budgets. Since independence, the country has had two major medium- to long-term strategies or visions in the form of the Growth with Equity Strategy of the early 1980s and the Vision 2020 Programme of the late 1980s. Table 2.1 shows some of the key economic policies implemented by Zimbabwe since independence.

**Table 2.1: Zimbabwe economic policies 1980-2016**

| Development plan | Period |
|---|---|
| Growth with Equity Strategy | 1981 |
| Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan | 1982-1985 |
| Zimbabwe First Five-Year National Development Plan | 1986-1990 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Zimbabwe Second Five-Year National Development Plan | 1991-1995 |
| Economic Structural Adjustment Programme | 1991-1995 |
| Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation | 1996 -2000 |
| Zimbabwe Vision 2020 | 1997 |
| Millennium Economic Recovery Programme | 2000-2002 |
| National Economic Recovery Plan | 2003 |
| Macroeconomic Policy Framework: Towards Sustained Economic Growth | 2005-2006 |
| National Economic Development Priority Programme | April-December 2006 |
| Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP I) | February-December 2009 |
| Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP II) | 2010 |
| Mid Term Plan | 2011-2013 |
| Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation | 2013-2018 |
| 10-Point Plan | 2015 |

***Growth with Equity Strategy***

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a dual economy characterized by a relatively well-developed modern sector and a largely poor rural sector that provided livelihood to about 80 percent of the country's population (Government of Zimbabwe, 2004). Against this backdrop, the government resolved to direct its spending towards social sectors with emphasis on the expansion of rural infrastructure and redressing social and economic inequalities through the land resettlement programme. For urban populations, policies pursued covered areas of minimum wages, black affirmative and indigenization policies to ensure an increase or rise in living standards for the urban population.

Just a year after independence in 1981, the Zimbabwean government implemented what was to be its first economic policy – Growth with Equity. The main aim of this plan was to achieve a sustainable high rate of economic growth and speedy development in order to raise incomes and standards of living of the general citizens of Zimbabwe.

The Growth with Equity plan set up a Commission of Inquiry into the Incomes, Prices and Conditions of Service. One of the major recommendations of the commission was the proposal to develop the "Poor People's Charter" that recommended that minimum salaries should be at least close to the poverty datum line. The Growth with Equity policy brought about high growth of 11 and 10 percent in 1980 and 1981, respectively (Kanyenze, 2007). Other positive returns of Growth-With-Equity policies were most visible in the education and health sectors where access to public services, resource allocation and distribution was deracialized.

The Growth with Equity policy statement provided a framework for overall sectoral policies and in this way constituted the basis for national policy planning. In general, it asserted the government's desire to develop the country guided by socialist and democratic principles in the allocation and distribution of resources and social benefits.

***Vision 2020***

Zimbabwe's development vision was first spelt out in a relatively comprehensive manner around the late 1990s under the framework and document known as 'Vision 2020'. This framework broadly defined the development vision statement, aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe and strategies to be employed. However, one notable weakness of this noble attempt to steer the nation in to a different direction was that the vision was not backed up by clearly defined development milestones in the form of goals, indicators and targets to help track progress and hold authorities accountable for the nation's progress. It is also sad that Vision 2020 remained a document piled up in some government offices and it never saw the light of the day.

The Vision Statement was that "Zimbabwe should emerge a united, strong, democratic, prosperous and egalitarian nation with high quality of life for all by the year 2020." It was envisaged that this proud and happy nation would by 2020 "strive for a highly competitive, sustainable, and industrialized economy benefiting from its national endowments including its natural resources." The objective was to ensure that Zimbabweans "continue to be guided by democratic principles, respect for human rights, with vibrant and tolerant culture while ensuring aesthetic, physical and spiritual welfare for all its citizens."

According to the Vision 2020 document, the national vision for Zimbabwe should be based on the aspirations identified by the people during a nation-wide consultation process carried in the early 1990s. These aspirations are supposed to be the foundation for the desired future and were key to the realization of Zimbabwe's national vision. The following is a summary of the aspirations to be realized during the vision period and beyond:

- Good Governance;
- Maintenance of political stability;
- Diversified economy with high growth rate;
- Access to social services by all;
- Acceleration of rural development;
- Equal opportunities for all;
- Development and utilization of modern science and technology;
- Vibrant and dynamic culture; and
- Sustainable utilization and management of natural resources.

According to Zimbabwe government officials, implementation of Vision 2020 was, however, affected by the hostile political situation in Zimbabwe starting from the beginning of the millennium. The political situation negatively impacted on the noble aspirations set out in the Vision document.

***Transitional National Development Plan 1982/83-1984/85***

The Zimbabwean government launched the Transitional National Development Plan in 1982, which covered the period 1982-1985. The plan focused on economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication. Among other measures, the plan aimed to address the inequalities which the then racially-segregated society faced as a result of colonialism (GoZ, 1991). It marked the first time that the government stated its intention, "subject to practical financial and economic constraints", to resettle 162,000 peasant families over the three-year period of the plan. The land issue was to later emerge at the turn of the century, leading to the promulgation of the Land Acquisition Act in 2002.

***First Five Year Development Plan***

Like its predecessor, the First Five Year National Development Plan (FFYNDP) from the year 1986 - 1990 focused on economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication. It played an important role in poverty eradication by creating more employment opportunities in non-agricultural sector which was the backbone of the economy. It is also under this policy that communal and resettled farmers accounted for most of the food supplied to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). It also interesting to note that it is under the First Five Year National Development Plan that Zimbabwe become the bread basket of southern Africa.

However, despite the success side of the plan, the government admitted that it had faced some challenges. These included in the area of rural development and land reform, economic expansion and employment creation, which were the priorities in the development planning of the first decade of independence.

***Economic Structural Adjustment Programme***

Soon after independence Zimbabwe started initiating its people driven policies of post war reconstruction and addressing the colonial imbalances for example in the education sector when it introduced education for all. These popular policies were well received by the locals until in 1990 when Zimbabwe succumbed to pressure from western countries and implemented the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). From October 1990, Zimbabwe started implementing the five-year ESAP that was crafted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as a way of addressing the some of the economic challenges the country was facing such as the high public sector wage bill.

One of the aims of ESAP was to de-emphasize its expenditure on social services and emphasize investment in the material production sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing. ESAP also aimed at pursuing a free market-led economic development strategy. However, as noted by Mlambo (2012), the reform programmes of 1990-2000 impacted negatively on social welfare in the country.

As a measure to curb some of these challenges the government through ESAP introduced measures such as: reduction of government expenditure, 40 percent devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, liberalising the foreign currency allocation system, removal of protection of non-productive import substituting industries and increased profit remittance abroad and restructuring of the various government parastatals.

Between 1991 and 1995, the government also introduced the ***Framework for Economic Reform***, which was to guide the government in reducing its support or involvement in the parastatals. The idea behind this policy was in a way to turn these parastatals into private companies so that they compete with others without the government protection which they had enjoyed for the previous years. The government also argued that it was a way of improving management and efficiency in these companies. While there were some visible progress in the area of commercialization, progress on the privatization front was very low. In fact, by close of the ESAP programme, not a single parastatal in Zimbabwe had been fully privatized (Zhou, 2000).

***Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation***

In 1998, the government launched the second stage of its economic structural adjustment programme known as the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). ZIMPREST initially was supposed to be introduced in the year 1996 but was delayed up to 1998. Taking major lessons from the failures of ESAP, its main aim was to restore economic stability, poverty eradication and also to facilitate public and private savings and investment as well as creating employment. The Africa Development Bank (AfDB) report on ZIMPREST of 1999 noted that the main aim on this policy was at deepening the reforms implemented under ESAP and removing the remaining structural weaknesses in the economy.

The idea looked good on paper but unfortunately it lacked the support from important stakeholders within the economy. Stakeholder participation was very low at its inception in 1998. When the ZIMPREST policy was introduced it emphasised the need to improving the quality of democratic institutions, pursuing a good governance system, and eliminating corruption in public offices.

The programme sought to achieve a target average annual growth rate of 6% and create 42 000 new jobs in the formal sector per annum. During this period, per capita income grew by 3.4% and consumption by 4.4%. In order to achieve minimum growth, government was expected to reduce its budget deficit from 10% in 1996 to less than 5% of GDP by 2000. The programme targeted to reduce inflation from over 20% to a single digit level over the same period. It also aimed to achieve higher levels of savings and investment, averaging at least 23% of GDP and export growth of at least 9% per annum.

**ZIMPREST OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ Urgent restoration of macro-economic stability (low inflation and interest rates and stable exchange rate);
- ✓ Facilitating the public and private savings and investment needed to attain growth;
- ✓ Pursuing economic empowerment and poverty alleviation by generating opportunities for employment and encouraging entrepreneurial initiative
- ✓ Investing in human resources development; and
- ✓ Providing a safety net for the disadvantaged

***Millennium Economic Recovery Programme***

The Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) was introduced in 2000 as measure to stabilise the economy which was facing pressure at the time. The aim of the MERP was to stabilise the economy through accelerating the land resettlement, reducing duties on all imported inputs, lowering production and capital costs, accelerating privatization to attract both local and foreign investment, rebuilding confidence in the economy, and providing effective and efficient infrastructure services. Some of the measures brought about by MERP included maintaining the public sector salaries at 12 percent of GDP and it also introduced the cash budgeting system. In terms of agriculture, the government set aside Z$1.6 billion which was allocated to support small–scale farmers in the communal and resettlement areas of Zimbabwe. Some of the notable measures brought about by this economic blueprint include was the formation of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). During the same period the Privatization Agency of Zimbabwe (PAZ) was also created to with sole aim of facilitating the privatisation of public companies.

However, the programme did not achieve the intended results due to multiple factors. One of the major reasons which led to the failure of this blueprint is poor implementation which can be attributed to policy inconsistencies between the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, which was in charge of monetary and inflation control, and the government, which was responsible for enhancing policy credibility and bringing spending under control. Another reason worth mentioning which led to the failure of this policy to achieve its intended results was the rate of growing corruption at this particular time. For example looting scandals at the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM).

***National Economic Revival Programme***

In 2003, Zimbabwe faced with a declining economy the government introduced the National Economic Revival Programme (NERP). The programme also focused on restoring the macro-economic stability. This was to be achieved by reducing the high rate of inflation which had characterized the economy during this particular period. This was to be done in all major areas of the economy but with specific focus in the agricultural sector which is the main driver of the economy. In short, the programme sought to kick start the economy basing on agriculture revival.

In the agricultural sector the programme focused on the following measures also with the goal of promoting rural development:

- Security of land tenure;
- Promotion of effective land utilization;
- Review of minimum farm sizes;
- Provision of farm input support;
- Proper producer pricing policies;
- Encouragement of contract farming;
- Promotion of dairy farming;

- Promotion of livestock development;
- Establishment of farmer associations;
- Promotion of irrigation development;
- Establishment of a land bank;
- Improvement of marketing of agricultural commodities internally and externally;
- Assurance of food security through productivity growth and least cost import programmes**.**

***National Economic Development Priority Programme***

The National Economic Development Priority Programme of 2007 was a short term blueprint which was meant to stabilise the economy. This was to be achieved through the implementation of quick win strategies. One of the specific goals of NEDPP were to mobilise foreign currency and resuscitating the industry with the country faced with de industrialization.

Unlike other previous blueprints the NEDPP brought important stakeholders on board such as business organizations to assist in the mobilization foreign currency and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Besides involving the business community it is unfortunate to note the strategy failed to achieve the intended results mainly due to the fact that at the same time the government was committed on another four-year blue print – Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) which ran from 2007 up to 2011.

Key focal points of the NEDPP included:

- reducing inflation;
- stabilising the currency;
- ensuring food security;
- increasing output and productivity;
- generation of foreign exchange;
- enhancement of expenditure and revenue management;
- removal of price distortions; and
- effective policy coordination and implementation.

***Short Term Economic Recovery Programme***

The Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) was first launched in March 2009 as part of the implementation of the Global Political Agreement. It was an emergency short-term stabilisation programme which ran from February to December 2009. The key goals of STERP were to stabilise the economy (macro and micro), improve levels of savings, investment and growth, and lay the basis for a more transformative mid-term to long-term economic programme that was to turn Zimbabwe into a progressive developmental state.

The STERP programme included three main priorities:

- Political and Governance Issues;
- Social Protection; and
- Stabilisation
    - Implementation of a growth-oriented recovery programme
    - Restoring the value of the local currency and guaranteeing its stability
    - Increasing capacity utilisation in all sectors of the economy and jobs creation
    - Ensuring adequate availability of essential commodities such as food, fuel and electricity
    - Rehabilitation of collapsed social, health and education sectors
    - Ensuring Adequate Water Supply

A second STERP programme ran from 2010 to 2011 and included the same targets.

***Mid Term Plan***
The Mid-Term Plan (MTP) covered the period 2011-2015 and set the platform for consolidating the macroeconomic stability achieved under STERP and was meant to propel the economy to a high and sustainable growth path. The plan was in response to a mandate espoused in Article III of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to support the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe.

Targets of the MTP were:

- Achieve GDP of $9 billion by 2015;
- Maintain single digit annual inflation;
- Low interest rates and sustainable BOP with a current account balance of not less than 5 percent of GDP;
- Increase in employment to above 1997 levels by 2015;
- Sustained poverty reduction and progress in line with MDG targets;
- Foreign exchange reserves of at least three months import cover by 2015;
- Double digit savings and investment ratios by 2015; and
- Improved social indicators, including education and health as they are fundamental for the sustainable development of the economy.

The MTP was a five year plan that was supported by a results and implementation matrix which was to be revised annually.

***Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation***
The Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset) 2013-2018 is a cluster based Plan, reflecting the strong need to fully exploit the internal relationships and linkages that exist between the various facets of the economy. These clusters are as follows:

- Food Security and Nutrition;
- Social Services and Poverty Eradication;
- Infrastructure and Utilities; and
- Value Addition and Beneficiation

To buttress the aforementioned clusters, two sub-clusters were also developed, namely Fiscal Reform Measures; and Public Administration, Governance and Performance Management. To ensure the successful implementation of ZimAsset, key strategies, success factors and drivers have been identified as implementation pillars. Under this arrangement, initiatives identified under each Cluster will be implemented immediately to yield rapid results (Quick Wins) in the shortest possible time frame (October 2013-December 2015), with the other deliverables targeted up to December 2018. In the process, Government will undertake blitz interventions in the delivery of services.

In order to ensure that the plan is fully funded, the following have been identified as financing mechanisms:

- Tax and non-tax revenue,
- Sovereign Wealth Fund,
- Issuance of bonds,
- Accelerated implementation of Public Private Partnerships,
- Securitization of remittances,
- Re-engagement with international and multilateral finance institutions, and
- Other financing options, focusing on Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).

The Office of the President and Cabinet is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ZimAsset.

***Ten-Point Plan***
Introduced in 2015, the plan aimed to maintain economic growth, in particular the creation of jobs. The plan was anchored on the agriculture sector and value addition and beneficiation. Another key government priority that aimed to retain the economy to sustained growth was the reform of parastatals and state enterprises. To this end, the government instituted a Parastatal Reform Programme targeting 10 key enterprises such as the Grain Marketing Board and Cold Storage Company.

Main targets of the plan were:

- Revitalizing agricultural and the agro-processing value chain;
- Advancing beneficiation and or value addition of agricultural and mineral resource endowment;
- Supporting infrastructure development in key sectors like energy, water, transport and Information Communication Technologies;
- Unlocking potential of Small to Medium Enterprises;
- Encouraging private sector investment;
- Restoration and building confidence and stability in the financial services sector;
- Promoting joint ventures and public private partnerships to boost the role and performance of state owned companies;
- Modernizing labour laws;
- Pursuing anti- corruption thrust; and
- Implementation of special economic zones to provide impetus for foreign direct investment.

## 2.4 Challenges

Like in many other African countries, economic policy planning and formulation in Zimbabwe has faced numerous challenges in the past years since independence in 1980. One of the challenges is policy inconsistency, which has negatively affected policy implementation in Zimbabwe. In some instances – as in the case of the indigenisation policy – different line ministries would have different interpretations of the policy and the relevant laws.

Another challenge is that some policies such as the ESAP did not involve sectoral stakeholders during the crafting stages. As a result, there is usually little buy-in from the relevant constituencies that are supposed to help in implementing the policies.

Funding challenges have played a crucial role in disrupting implementation of Zimbabwe's economic policies. Western economic sanctions imposed in the early 2000s have had a telling effect in this regard. The sanctions have led to the withdrawal of budgetary support by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other financial institutions and international cooperating partners. For instance, Zimbabwe is estimated to have lost more than US$42 billion in potential revenue from the European Union since the imposition of the sanctions (The Herald, October 2013).

To circumvent the impact of the sanctions, the Zimbabwean government has since 2000 promoted the "Look East" policy and strengthened relations with China and other Asian countries. This has seen China becoming the largest investor in Zimbabwe in sectors such as agriculture, energy and mining.

Political squabbles have also in a way affected the smooth implementation of some policies. This was particularly visible during the Inclusive Government when the parties involved in the government squabbled about economic strategy resulting in the abandonment of the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy, a few years after it came into force.

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