

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

Zambia is a landlocked Sub-Saharan country sharing boundaries with Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania. It has a total surface area of about 752,614 square km, thus ranking among the smaller countries in South Central Africa. It lies between 8° and 18° south latitudes and longitudes 22° and 34° east.

1.1. Administration

Zambia gained independence from Britain on 24th October 1964. It has experienced three major phases of governance, the multiparty system from 1964 to 1972, one party system from 1972 to 1991 and multiparty system again since 1991.

Administratively, the country is divided into nine provinces, namely Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern, North-Western, Southern and Western provinces. These provinces are further subdivided into a total of seventy-two (72) districts. Lusaka is the capital city of Zambia and seat of government. The government comprises of the Central and Local government.

1.2. Natural resources

Zambia is situated on the great plateau of Central Africa. Its vegetation is mainly made up of savannah woodlands and grassland. It has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons, the cool and dry season, the hot and dry season and the hot and wet season.

The country has abundant natural resources. It has five main rivers, namely Zambezi, Kafue, Luangwa, Luapula, and Chambeshi rivers. In addition to these rivers, the country also has major lakes such as Tanganyika, Mweru, Mweru Wa Ntipa, Bangweulu and the man-made lakes Kariba and Itezhi Tezhi. Other interesting features include the Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Zambia has some of nature's best wildlife and game reserves affording the country with abundant tourism potential for earning foreign exchange. The magnificent Luangwa and Kafue National Parks have one of the most prolific animal populations in Africa. It is also endowed with various minerals and precious stones such as copper, emeralds, zinc, lead and cobalt.

1.3. Population

The population of Zambia has continued to grow. The 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses estimated the population of Zambia to be at 5.7, 7.8 and 9.9 million respectively. However, the annual population growth rate has shown a decline from 3.1 between 1969-80, to 2.7 percent between 1980-90 and most recently 2.4 percent between 1990-2000.

Population by province ranges from 1.6 million in the Copperbelt to 0.6 million in North-western. High inter-censal population growth rates have been recorded for provinces such as Lusaka (3.4 percent), Luapula (3.2 percent) and Northern (3.1 percent). Copperbelt recorded the lowest population growth rate at less than one percent.

Zambia is one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Sahara Africa with about 35 percent of the population living in urban areas. However, this is a decline from 39 percent in 1990. The percentage of urban population by province ranges from 82 and 78 percent for Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces respectively, to nine percent for Eastern province.

The average population density for the country has increased from 5.4 in 1969, 7.5 in 1980, and 10.3 in 1990 to 13.1 persons per square kilometre in 2000. Average density by province ranged from 64 persons per square kilometre in Lusaka province to five persons per square kilometre in North-western province.

Zambia, with a median age at about 17 years has a relatively youthful population.

1.4. Language

English is Zambia's official language. The main vernacular languages are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda.

1.5. Economy

In 1991, Zambia adopted an open, private sector-led economy with minimal government control. Zambia's economy is based largely on copper and cobalt mining. Copper, which is the country's mainstay, accounts for approximately 80 percent of the country's export earnings. However, due to unfavourable copper prices since 1975, export earnings have been declining. This decline has partly been responsible for poor performance of the real sectors of the economy that mainly rely on imported raw materials and capital items.

The country's balance of payment status has mainly depended on the performance of the mining industry. Despite the additional foreign exchange earnings from non-traditional exports, the country still continues to pay more to the outside world than it earns from its exports; hence the poor balance of payments performance. During the recent drought years, food imports have continued to be high mainly due to the drop in domestic agricultural output.

In an attempt to address this problem, government adopted the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1991, with the intention of creating macro-economic stability in the economy. Measures taken include liberalization of trade, prices, interest and foreign exchange rates, removal of subsidies, privatisation, reduction in public expenditure, public sector reforms and liberalization of the marketing and pricing of agricultural produce.

Structurally, Zambia's economy has changed little in spite of the above-implemented measures. Consistent high economic growth has been elusive. Over the period 1980 to 1990, the country's economic growth was the second lowest in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) after Mozambique. Over the period 1990 to 1999, it has the least average annual growth rate in the SADC region at one percent. That was also below the Sub-Saharan Africa rate of 1.4 percent. However, between 1994 and 2002, real GDP growth showed an increase from 2.2 percent in 1999 to 3.6 percent in 2000 and 4.9 percent in 2001, before declining to 3.0 in 2002. (*Source: Zambia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002-2004*)

1.6. Agriculture

The real growth rate in the agricultural sector has fluctuated significantly mainly due to the sector's high dependence to seasonal rainfall, reduced investments and the failure to strategically position the sector according to its comparative advantage. The sector's contribution to GDP averaged 18 percent over the past decade. Non-traditional, mainly agriculture-based exports increased from \$46.5 million in 1995 to \$133.9 million in 1999, thus demonstrating the enormous potential the sector possesses. Some 75 percent of Zambia's Population is engaged in agriculture, largely subsistence farming, which remains vulnerable to weather fluctuations. (*Source: Zambia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002-2004*)

1.7. Employment

Overall unemployment rates have declined from 15 percent in 1990 to 13 percent in 2000. However, unemployment has drastically increased in urban areas from 16 percent in 1990 to 26 percent in 2000 compared to the rural areas where it has dropped from 15 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2000. Overall unemployment rates are higher for males at 14 percent compared to females at 11 percent.

Youth unemployment is still very high in Zambia. The 2000 census shows that 23 and 21 percent of the youths aged between 15–19 and 20-24, respectively, were unemployed. By residence, youth unemployment was higher in the urban areas than rural areas, 55 percent compared to 12 percent in the age group 15-19 and 42 percent compared to 9 percent in the age group 20-25. Youth unemployment was slightly lower among females at 21 percent compared to 25 percent in the age group 15-19 and 18 percent compared to 23 percent in the age group 20-25.

In terms of employment, the agriculture industry was the most dominant sector, accounting for 72 percent of the Zambian workers in 2000. This is an increase from 42 percent in 1990. The rest of the sectors experienced decreases. The most significant are Mining (three percent in 1990 to one percent in 2000) and Manufacturing (five percent in 1990 to five percent in 2000). (Source: *Central Statistics Office, 2000*)

1.8. Education

Zambia has a three-tier education system consisting of seven-year primary education, followed by five-year secondary education. Post secondary schooling is the last stage. Poverty in education sector manifests itself in several ways, including the following: low enrolments, low progression, and high dropout rates; poor attendance because the children are engaged in income-generating activities to supplement family income, attending to the sick family members, and long distances to school; poor learning environments and lack of appropriate skills training; malnourished learners who are unable to achieve their full learning potential; de-motivated teachers .etc. There has been a slight increase in the population attending school from 25.8 percent to 26.7 percent. (Source: *Ministry of Education, 2003*)

1.9. Health

The government's commitment to the objective of improving the quality of life for Zambians is demonstrated through its efforts to improve health care delivery by reforming the health sector. In 1991, it articulated radical health care reforms characterised by a move from a strongly centralised health system in which the central structures provided support and national guidance to the peripheral structures. An important component of health policy reform is the restructured Primary Health Care.

Following the implementation of health reforms, improvements in the general health indicators in Zambia have been seen. For instance, Life expectancy at birth improved from 47 years in 1990 to 50 years in 2000. Infant Mortality rate dropped from 123 in 1990 to 110 in 2000. However, Maternal mortality has remained moderately high since 1996 (649 per 100,000 women and 729 per 100,000 women in 2002).

The number of health institutions in the country stands at 1,285. These include three Central hospitals, four Specialised hospitals, eighteen General Hospitals, forty-two District hospitals, one military hospital and eight Industrial hospitals. There are also 899 Rural Health Centres, 187 Urban Health Centres, 20 Industrial rural Health centres and 75 Industrial urban Health centres. The number of health post is nine, while the number of mission hospitals stands at nineteen. (Source: *Ministry of Health, 2002*)

1.10. HIV/AIDS Situation in Zambia

The first HIV/AIDS case was reported in Zambia in 1985. Initially, the epidemic of HIV/AIDS cases was in the urban areas, but it soon became clear that all parts of the country were affected. According to the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) 2001-2002, Sixteen percent of the Zambian adult population is HIV positive. The prevalence varies by residence. The Urban HIV prevalence of about (23 percent) is twice that of the rural areas (11 percent). Provinces with prevalence levels above the national average include Lusaka (22 percent), Copperbelt (20 percent), and Southern (18 percent). The lowest prevalence levels are found in Northern province (8 percent) and North-Western province (9 percent). In terms of gender, the prevalence rates are markedly higher in women than in men in all provinces except North-Western.

1.11. Poverty

Poverty is a serious problem in Zambia. A series of national surveys conducted by the Central Statistical Office – the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Priority Surveys of 1991 and 1993 and the Living Conditions Monitoring Surveys of 1996 and 1998 provide trends in the various dimensions of poverty in Zambia. Data from these surveys show that, in general, poverty in most of the critical dimensions increased during the decade. Table 1.1 below portrays the changes in selected indicators of money-metric poverty. The statistics are based on poverty lines determined by the CSO. In order to ensure comparability of results over time, these poverty lines were the same as those adopted in previous surveys in 1991, 1993 and 1996. The same basket of food has been used throughout, but the poverty lines were adjusted to 1998 prices from the 1991 prices. Similar adjustments were made for the poverty lines in 1993 and 1996, also from the 1991 prices. (Source: *Living Conditions Monitoring Survey in Zambia, 1998.*)

Table 1.1: Overall and Extreme Poverty in Zambia by Residence, 1991-1998

Year	Zambia		Rural		Urban	
	Overall Poverty %	Extreme Poverty %	Overall Poverty %	Extreme Poverty %	Overall Poverty %	Extreme Poverty %
1991	70	58	88	81	49	32
1993	74	61	92	84	45	24
1996	69	53	83	68	46	27
1998	73	58	83	71	56	36

Source: CSO, Living Conditions Monitoring Survey in Zambia, 1998
CSO, The Evolution of Poverty in Zambia 1990-1996

1.12. Distribution of Poverty

Just as all socio-economic groups do not uniformly experience poverty, it is also not uniformly spread across the country. There is greater concentration of poverty in the rural areas than in the urban areas, and in the provinces outside the country's main line of rail than in the provinces along the line of rail. There are also intra-provincial disparities. The distribution of Zambia's poor by province show that the poorest provinces are Western, Luapula, Northern, Eastern and North-western.

Table 1.2: Overall and Extreme Poverty in Zambia by Residence, 1998

Province	Overall Poverty %	Extreme Poverty %	Moderate Poverty %	Not Poor %	Total %	Total Number of persons
All Zambia	73	58	15	27	100	9,885,591
Rural	83	71	12	17	100	6,452,283
Urban	56	36	20	44	100	3,433,308
Central	77	63	14	23	100	1,012,257
Copperbelt	65	47	18	35	100	1,581,221
Eastern	80	66	13	21	100	1,306,173
Luapula	81	69	13	18	100	775,353
Lusaka	52	35	18	47	100	1,391,329
Northern	81	66	15	19	100	1,258,696
North-western	76	64	13	23	100	583,350
Southern	76	59	16	25	100	1,212,124
Western	89	78	11	11	100	765,088

Source: CSO, Living Conditions in Zambia, 1998

1.13. Gender Issues

Gender issues are concerned with promoting equality between the sexes and improvement in the status of both women and men in society. Gender issues are also cardinal in achieving sustainable economic growth, job creation, ensuring better food security and reducing poverty. In the 1990 and 2000 censuses no significant differences were observed in terms of occupation between males and females. However, slightly more females (79 percent) than males (65 percent) are engaged in agriculture. The other interesting observation is that women were classified as economically inactive mainly because of home making (53 percent), where as the males were classified as economically inactive mainly due to studying (65 percent).

It is further observed that though the proportion of the female employed population increased during the reference period 53 percent, there has been no significant improvement in the quality of their work. A large proportion of females compared to males are employed as unpaid family workers, 62 percent (2000) and 25 percent (2000), respectively.

The 2000 census also recorded a slight increase in the proportion of female-headed household from 17 percent in 1990 to 19 percent in 2000. This means that more females are increasingly becoming the main economic support for households. However, persons in female-headed households are more likely to be extremely poor than those in male-headed household. The 1998 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey shows that poverty associated with food security was more prevalent among female-headed households (61 percent) compared to male-headed households (52 percent).