# Sustainable Luangwa: Securing Luangwa’s water resources for shared socioeconomic and environmental benefits through integrated catchment management

# **Gender Analysis**

## **Introduction**

This provisional gender analysis is prepared as an input to inform the design and implementation of the project titled “Sustainable Luangwa: Securing Luangwa’s water resources for shared socioeconomic and environmental benefits through integrated catchment management”.

This analysis reflects provisional desktop analysis undertaken in the development of the Project Identification Form (PIF) — It is expected that a more thorough analysis may be completed in later project stages, incorporating primary research.

## **Context**

Located in south-central Africa and bordering eight other countries, Zambia is a landlocked country, initially administrated under British colonial rule and gaining independence in 1964. Zambia is ethnically heterogeneous, with more than 70 different languages or dialects spoken across the country. Zambia’s population growth rate is 2.91% per annum — 10th highest in the world — with World Bank estimating that its population currently stands at ~17.1 million (2017)[[1]](#footnote-2). The Global Climate Risk Index 2018[[2]](#footnote-3) ranks Zambia 15th worldwide in climate-change related losses per unit GDP with a GDP loss of $310 million in 2016. As the PIF outlines, Zambia is experiencing considerable land degradation and biodiversity loss from expanding agriculture, deforestation and land-use change. These effects, combined with anticipated climate change in coming decades, threaten the livelihoods of the majority rural population. Climate models predict increases in: i) variability in rainfall seasonality[[3]](#footnote-4); ii) duration of dry spells[[4]](#footnote-5); iii) frequency of extreme rainfall events[[5]](#footnote-6),[[6]](#footnote-7); iv) average temperatures (1.2–3.4°C)[[7]](#footnote-8); and v) frequency of extreme temperature events[[8]](#footnote-9).

## **Status of Gender Equality**

Like many African states, Zambia sustains a dual structure of statutory and customary laws that promote or constrain gender equality to different degrees. Customary laws are upheld and reinforced by social norms and traditional values, and with the majority of the country living in rural areas, statutory regulations, however noble, can struggle to penetrate and affect meaningful transformation.

### **Social norms and practices**

Despite statutory protections that support gender equality (in the case of inheritance and divorce for example), Zambia is a patriarchal society with numerous customary practices that constrain women’s agency, mobility and independence. In Zambia men usually: i) are the head of households; ii) win custody of minor children following divorce; and ii) dominate decision-making. These social norms and cultural beliefs tend to dominate, particularly rural, social institutions and day-to-day life, often superseding statutory laws or policies. For example, despite a statutory minimum marriage age of 21, Zambia has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world[[9]](#footnote-10) with higher prevalence in rural areas, than in urban centres.

### **Major Indicators and Political Participation**

Zambia was ranked 125th among 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index and categorized as Group 3[[10]](#footnote-11) in the Gender Development Index by the United Nations Development Programme in 2017[[11]](#footnote-12),[[12]](#footnote-13). In 2017, women held only 18% (up from 10.1% in 2000) of seats in parliament[[13]](#footnote-14). The OECD Development Centre outlines the following barriers to women’s political participation: i) first past the post electoral system[[14]](#footnote-15); ii) marginalisation in political parties; iii) lack of financial resources to pay nomination fees; iv) difficulties in raising funds for election campaigns; v) low levels of education; vi) cultural perceptions of women in society; vii) violence and verbal abuse against female candidates; and viii) sexual harassment[[15]](#footnote-16). This limited representation and low political participation results in women being underrepresented in environment and climate change related decision-making processes, including land and resource management.

### **Economic Participation**

In Zambia, labour force participation rates[[16]](#footnote-17) for women lag behind men (70.1% to 79.7%)[[17]](#footnote-18), and with internal gender-based disparities. In 2016, only 11.8% of female employment was waged and salaried workers, compared with 31.3% of male employment[[18]](#footnote-19). Women tend to dominate the informal employment sectors, limiting their pay, benefits and social security[[19]](#footnote-20). Additionally, while men’s unemployment more than halved between 2000 and 2016 (14.8% to 7.2%), women’s unemployed only decreased from 10.9% to 8.4%[[20]](#footnote-21). This suggests barriers to women entering the workforce, possibly owing to societal norms that constrain their access, mobility or attainment.

Legally, men and women have equal access to formal financial resources; in practice, women are constrained from accessing credit and financial services owing to a lack of supportive legal instruments as well as restrictive cultural norms and their subsequent impact on capabilities[[21]](#footnote-22). Thus, despite an enabling legal framework and national policy (as discussed below), many women remain constrained or limited from expanding their livelihoods.

### **Land Ownership and Environmental Stewardship**

Although the Interstate Succession Act grants male and female heirs equal rights to inherit land and non-land assets, inheritance of the former is limited by these laws not applying to land held under customary tenure, which constitute the majority of land in Zambia[[22]](#footnote-23). As a result, land tends to pass to male relatives, occasionally without the accompanying traditional responsibilities of the heir to care for women and children displaced as a result[[23]](#footnote-24). When considered in conjunction with the tendency of women to enter agriculture upon marriage, this likely means women have little decision-making authority over the lands they depend upon, nor any higher-level substantive representation in land or other resource management.

### **Education, Literacy and Information**

The Gender Inequality Index estimates that, between 2010 and 2017, only 39.2% of women aged 25 and older had at least some secondary education, compared with 52.4% in men aged 25 and older for the same period. In high- and middle-income populations, females obtain higher completion rates of lower secondary schooling than males, but in low-income populations this reverses, with an absolute decrease in completion rates[[24]](#footnote-25). As a result, low-income women (as the majority in rural areas) have lower attainment than men, which may additionally constrain them accessing or being aware of alternative livelihoods, statutory instruments etc. that ultimately reinforce their relative customary subservience.

### **Health**

The fertility rate in Zambia is historically amongst the highest in the world (6th in 2018), with a wide range between high income, urban and low income, rural populations. This high rate is likely owing to a lack of access to family planning services and relatively lower girls’ education and women’s employment, relative to men and boys[[25]](#footnote-26). Between 2000 and 2016, the adolescent fertility rate[[26]](#footnote-27) almost halved from 141.6 to 86[[27]](#footnote-28).

Life expectancy at birth, for females in 2016 was 64.5 years (up from 46.4 years in 2000) compared to 59.3 years for men (up from 43 years in 2000. Life expectancy has risen considerably since 2000, and this is likely attributable to medical advances in treating and living with HIV. Zambia carries the 7th highest rate of HIV prevalence globally[[28]](#footnote-29), with women continuing to disproportionately carry the burden of disease, with 59.6% of the population living with HIV[[29]](#footnote-30) being female (up from 58.2% in 2000)[[30]](#footnote-31). Although the prevalence of HIV[[31]](#footnote-32) has decreased to 11.5% (2017) from a crisis high of 15.9% (1997-1998), this rate is still greater than the recorded low of 8.4% (1990)[[32]](#footnote-33).

### **Gender-Based Violence**

The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act (2011) addresses violence against women; it recognises “any physical, mental, social and economic abuse against a person because of that person’s gender” and establishes the Anti Gender-Based Violence Committee. Despite this, domestic violence remains widespread with a high prevalence rate, reinforced by traditional authoritative beliefs that place men as head of household and women are subservient[[33]](#footnote-34). Women’s relative economic disempowerment often prevents them from leaving their husbands or seeking legal regress (where this is even available) and societal expectations discourage reporting incidents of domestic violence. This societal acceptance of intimate partner violence is reinforced, particularly in rural areas, through limited awareness of a lack of access to community or statutory justice instruments.

Rape and sexual harassment are additional issues in Zambia, although their incidence is hard to accurately quantify given strong conservative and patriarchal sentiments, as well as practical barriers that discourage reporting and limit prosecution.

## **Policy Environment**

### Legal Framework

Zambia has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. They have additionally developed national policies and legislation to give effect to their international and domestic obligations and development objectives. These policies include: i) National Gender Policy 2014[[34]](#footnote-35); ii) Climate Change Gender Action Plan of the Republic of Zambia 2016[[35]](#footnote-36); and iii) Gender Equity and Equality Act 2015.

Gender Equity and Equality Act 2015 is intended to “promote gender equity and equality as a cross cutting issue in all spheres of life and stimulate productive resources and development opportunities for both sexes; prohibit harassment, victimisation and harmful social, cultural and religious practices; [and] provide for public awareness and training on issues of gender equity and equality”[[36]](#footnote-37). The preamble to the Zambian Constitution (2016) includes: “We, the people of Zambia…confirm the equal worth of women and men and their right to freely participate in, determine and build a sustainable political, legal, economic and social order” and other clauses strive for gender equity and equitable advancement in representative bodies and the public service.

### Gender Machineries/Bodies

The Zambian cabinet includes a Ministry of Gender “committed to protecting and promoting women's rights, curbing gender-based violence and reducing gender inequalities by making progressive changes to legislation to strengthen the protective environment”. The Gender Equity and Equality Act 2015 establishes the Gender Equity and Equality Commission which the constitution describes to “promote the attainment and mainstreaming of gender equality”. The Gender Equity and Equality Commission should: i) monitor, investigate, research, educate, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality; ii) ensure institutions comply with legal requirements and other standards relating to gender equality; and iii) take steps to secure appropriate redress to complaints relating to gender inequality, as prescribed.

### Gender and Environment/Climate Change

In 2016, GoZ advanced the Climate Change Action Plan of the Republic of Zambia. This document addresses the integration of women and gender mainstreaming into climate change policy, outlining how previous policies and legislation that have included considerations of women and gender. Often, women are only included as identified vulnerable populations to environmental degradation and climate change impacts, or as co-beneficiaries to adaptation strategies. The National Policy on Environment (NPE, 2007), however, includes the guiding principle that “women and men including the youth should play a key role in the sustainable utilisation of renewable natural resources and other development programmes;” as well as a strategy to enhance women’s participation in environmental management activities at all levels[[37]](#footnote-38). Zambia is also regionally and internationally mandated to incorporate consideration of women into environmental planning, and to include them in decision-making processes.

## **Conclusion**

## This provisional gender analysis has outlined some of the key considerations to be made in designing and implementing a gender-sensitive project response to the issues of land degradation and biodiversity in Zambia, as developed in the PIF.

1. World Bank. Data portal. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ZM&view=chart> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Germanwatch. 2018. Climate Risk Index 2018. Available: <https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/publication/20432.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Gannon, C. et al. 2014. Near-term climate change in Zambia: What the research tells us. Project Report: Future climate change for Africa. Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre. Available online at: <https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Near-term-climate-change-zambia.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Gannon, C. et al. 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. in addition to decreases in the number of consecutive wet days [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Gannon, C. et al. 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. World Bank. Climate change knowledge portal. Available online at: <http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/countryprofile/home.cfm?page=country_profile&CCode=ZMB&ThisTab=ClimateFuture> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Gannon, C. et al. 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. UNICEF, 2015 in OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 3 signifies medium equality in human development performance between women and men. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. United Nations Development Programme. 2017. Gender Inequality Index (GII). Available: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. United Nations Development Programme. 2017. Gender Development Index (GDI). Available: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. World Bank. 2016. *Gender Data Portal.* Gender Indicators Report for Zambia. Available: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/zambia> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. First past the post (FPTP) is an electoral system where the candidate with the most votes, even if not a majority, will win the position. This system is critiqued for being unrepresentative, when compared to alternatives like proportional representation or majoritarian systems, in that the share of seats or positions does not reflect the share of the vote. In this way, marginal distinctions (like culturally favouring male candidates for example) are inflated into major electoral outcomes. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. European Union Election Observation Missions, 2016; UNDP Zambia, n.d.; Ministry of Gender and Child Development, 2015; The Commonwealth, 2016; VSO, 2013; Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2014 cited in OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. Available: <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/ZM.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Ages 15 and older, in 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. United Nations Development Programme. 2017. Gender Development Index (GDI). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. CEDAW, 2011; Ministry Of Gender and Child Development, n.d.in OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. World Bank (2016*). Gender Data Portal*. Gender Indicators Report for Zambia [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Spicher and Kabala, 2014; World Bank, 2012 as cited in OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.:* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. World Bank. 2016*. Gender Data Portal*. Gender Indicators Report for Zambia [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Central Intelligence Agency. 2019. *The World Factbook.* Report for Zambia. Available: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Births per 1,000 women ages 15-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. World Bank. 2016*. Gender Data Portal*. Gender Indicators Report for Zambia [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Ages 15+, 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. World Bank. 2016. *Gender Data Portal*. Gender Indicators Report for Zambia [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. % of population ages 15-49 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. World Bank. Data portal. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.AIDS.ZS?locations=ZM> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. OECD Development Centre. 2019. *Social Institutions & Gender Index.* Zambia Country Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Ministry of Gender and Child Development. 2014. National Gender Policy. Available online at: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/zam152916.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Ministry of Gender and Child Development. 2016. ccGAP:ZM. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Republic of Zambia. 2016. *Ministry of Gender.* Available: <http://www.mgcd.gov.zm/> [Accessed: 24/01/2019] [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Government of Zambia. 2016. Climate Change Gender Action Plan of the Republic of Zambia ccGAP:ZM [↑](#footnote-ref-38)