



Leverage COVID ranking

THE ranking of Zambia as the 4th safest destination out of 70 countries with verifiable data during the COVID-19 pandemic is no mean achievement given how 'developed' countries with more resources have struggled with the pandemic.

Zambia should, therefore, make the most of this ranking by enticing more visitors who would rekindle the tourism sector and other sectors that lost business due to drastically reduced foreign arrivals.

According to an article published on the Wego Travel Blog website, titled 'safe places to travel to during COVID-19 pandemic', of the 70 countries with sufficient data and testing, only six were ranked as "safe" to travel to. Zambia is among them.

Australia ranked first in the global safe destinations for travel during the coronavirus pandemic, followed by New Zealand, Singapore, Zambia, Cuba and Saudi Arabia.

Zambia ranked fourth with 264 examinations and 0.7 percent new cases per one million people.

The first two cases, of COVID-19 in Zambia were reported in March, this year.

To date, out of a population of about 18 million people, Zambia has recorded 17,608 cases cumulatively with 357 COVID-19-related deaths. The total number of recoveries stands at 16,983 with 268 cases still active.

Zambia should be grateful that despite limited resources, it has contained the pandemic with most COVID centres closing down due to negligible infections.

Zambia's ranking comes at a time when countries across the globe including South Africa, USA and UK among others are still under siege because the pandemic has persisted, and ferociously so.

The ranking underscores the fact that Zambia is doing the right thing in collective efforts to fight the pandemic.

When the two cases were recorded, Zambia, like many other countries, acted swiftly and firmly to implement measures-aimed curbing the pandemic.

Besides establishing COVID centres where patients could be kept and treated, Government implemented preventive measures, among them restrictions and in some cases a ban of public gatherings including some businesses, schools

and churches. Government, through the Ministry of Health, has consistently conducted tests and provided up-to-date information on the pandemic.

Through the updates, the nation and the world at large have been well informed about the number of infections, recoveries and deaths.

Perhaps this is why it has been easy for Wego Travel to verify the data on COVID-19 and rate the country accordingly.

This is a job well done by the Ministry of Health for consistently and tirelessly working hard to ensure that the COVID situation is under control.

We also commend the medical personnel who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to the extent of putting their lives in harm's way. Sadly, others lost their lives in the process of saving lives.

It is, however, comforting to know that the efforts of these brave men and women have helped to keep Zambia as one of the safest places in the world in as far as COVID-19 is concerned.

Zambians must commend themselves for adhering to laid down Covid-19 regulations - not perfectly well, but fairly well.

The ranking will no doubt open up the country to tourism opportunities that were shattered due to the pandemic.

Needless to say tourism, because of its travel nature, was one of the sectors most affected by COVID-19.

Many hotels and tourism sites were deserted as travel was put on hold in a bid to contain the pandemic.

Zambia has lost huge sums of revenue in the tourism sector due to travel bans.

It is, however, elating that with the positive report, Zambia's tourism sector can be revived once again.

Tourists can be assured that it is safe once again to come to Zambia. Investors, too, can now start flocking in numbers knowing that their lives are not at risk. However, this does not mean doing away with health guidelines on preventing COVID-19.

It simply means tourists and investors can now visit Zambia under the new normal guidelines of masking up, sanitising and social distancing.

Zambia should use the ranking to encourage more tourists and investors to come to Zambia. This will no doubt help put the country on its economic recovery path.

Sustainable extraction of natural resources

Balancing needs for present, future generations



MWIZA MBEWE

IN 2015, the United Nations (UN) member states universally adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and committed to achieving their targets by the year 2030.

The SDGs present an integrated approach for economic, social and environmental objectives across sectors, territories and generations. They recognise that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequalities and promote economic growth while tackling climate change and preserving the oceans and forests. In Zambia, the 7th National Development Plan 2017-2021 (7NDP) was designed to take into account the SDGs as well as several other regional and global development agendas.

Sustainable development is defined by the UN as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. For Zambia, its inherent economic dependence on natural resources presents an inimitable, though not entirely unique, challenge on how to

ensure that the future generations also benefit from the same; particularly given that natural resources are generally wasting assets.

Many countries that face the same dilemma as Zambia have established Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) as the solution for the intergenerational claims on natural resources. The SWFs, which are state-owned investment funds, use revenues from commodity exports to invest globally in real and financial assets such as stocks, bonds, real estate, precious metals and private equities. In Africa, the countries with SWFs include Botswana, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Uganda, Gabon and Nigeria. For Zambia, on 9th October 2015 the Minister of Finance committed the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to channel its dividends earned 'to the SWF to spur further investments for the benefit of future generations'. This was during the 2016 Budget Address.

Unfortunately, it appears that the operational establishment of the Zambian SWF has stalled. A perusal of the Budget Addresses for 2017 to 2021 reveals that there is no mention of the SWF; this despite tax and direct revenues from the sales of Copper, Mukula trees and other natural resources. As regards IDC, there are obviously structural issues that need to be resolved with the Board Investment Committee Chairman recently revealing that only 8 out of its portfolio in excess of 30 companies paid dividends of just over K140 million as at September 2020.

Given the absence of the SWF, the country has to reconfigure an alternative arrangement to protect the intergenerational equity for natural resources. As it turns out, the SDGs targets do provide guidance as shown below:

- By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources (2.2);
- By 2025, prevent and

significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution (14.1); and,

- By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally (15.2).

The proposal here is that natural resources extraction should be done in such a manner that there is enough left over for future Zambian generations to produce the benefits by themselves. That opportunity should come with adequate and appropriate training for their involvement in the natural resources' value chains right through to the international markets; in other words, having control over the extraction, processing, value-addition, marketing and sales, and with due consideration for the generations after them. The preparation can be defined as part of the SDGs targets below:

- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (4.3);
- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youths and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (4.4);
- By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (8.6);
- Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries (9.2);
- Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in

developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets (9.3); and,

- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (16.6).

Evidently, the institutionalisation of the SDG targets requires significant financial investment and for that, there is an SDG target that can be applied:

- Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection (17.1).

The emergence of COVID-19 has obviously brought challenges with regard to mobilising resources and the achievement of the SDGs. As per the UN's Sustainable Development Outlook 2020 report, COVID-19 has led to significant loss of output, employment and income which have in turn led to an increase in poverty and hunger. The report advises that the continued investment in efficient governance systems are the means to ensuring the continuity of the SDGs progress. In essence, the balancing of the needs for the present and future generations is still a cardinal objective.

Over the next 10 years, Zambia will develop and implement two National Development Plans. The questions to answer after the year 2030 will be: (i) to what extent has the country protected its future generations' equity in the natural resources; and, (ii) to what extent have future generations been prepared to better manage and benefit on the international markets from their natural resources?

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How to reduce young women's HIV risk: Go where they go



ESNART SIKAZINDU

TODAY we honour World AIDS Day as we do every December 1. It's a time to pay homage to those we've lost to AIDS while reflecting on where we are and how we might improve our response in the coming year.

In 2018, 48,000 people were newly infected and 1.2 million people are currently living with the virus in Zambia. We've made progress thus far, but in order to achieve control of HIV, we will need to use every existing tool to prevent further infections.

Particularly, it's the young women—making up 60 percent of the country's HIV burden—who need access to HIV prevention.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is part of a combination of HIV prevention package that Zambia has committed to scaling up, along with voluntary medical male circumcision and treatment. PrEP is a drug taken daily by HIV negative people who are at high risk for HIV infection. The truth is that PrEP is a powerful tool that when taken correctly can reduce risk of HIV by over 90 percent. Thus far, the country has done well, reaching about 75 percent of its PrEP target. But, as an HIV advocate, I would like to expand upon this success and call for an increase in the uptake of PrEP in our communities. In order to go beyond the low-hanging fruit, we need to know why some of those at risk have not yet been reached.

Community Based TB/HIV/AIDS Organisation, along with Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign, administered a PrEP community score card in Kapiri Mposhi and Choma districts to understand the obstacles to PrEP uptake among adolescent girls and young women. A number of deterrents to PrEP services were identified: Primarily,

community members are not aware of PrEP. Despite the World Health Organisation's 2015 recommendation to scale-up this medical breakthrough in Sub-Saharan Africa, ordinary citizens are still not aware of

Adolescents and young women fear stigma of ART clinics and are more apt to seek out PrEP at sexual and reproductive health clinics or other health facilities.

PrEP. Accordingly, the National AID Council (NAC) needs to rollout out a formidable and affective communications campaign geared toward young women.

Another issue that came out strongly as a barrier is the lack of integration of PrEP into health services. In Zambia, ARVs for people already living with HIV are offered at the ART department of health facilities. PrEP, being an ARV, is also delivered at the ART clinics—with the people who are there to receive HIV treatment. Adolescents and young women fear stigma of ART clinics and are more apt to seek out PrEP at sexual and reproductive health clinics or other health facilities. NAC should reprogram PrEP rollout by integrating it into other community health service outlets where PrEP users can be identified, linked to care and provided support.

Young, HIV-negative women are not in ART clinics. Until we meet them where they are with proper messages and at appropriate health settings, we'll continue to miss our targets. Let us celebrate more, and mourn less, next World AIDS Day.

The author is an AVAC Fellow, based at Community Based TB/HIV/AIDS Organisation.



From our page

Hunter inspecting trap finds friend's wife in act

A HUNTER found his friend's wife having sex with another man in the bush when he went to check on his snare, a local court has heard.

THE hunter wanted to mind his business but he got annoyed after realising that those two were the reason why his traps didn't catch animals because the animals were afraid.

LONZHO MUKOSA

HIS business was to check his traps not seeing those who were entangling. They thought going in a bush was safer than going to a lodge.

HON MAKUNGU MULENGA

DOES the hunter have a valid hunting licence? Zawa must take keen interest in this poacher.

JAMES MWALE

IS THIS even a bush where you can find animals sure? Where people can even seat on each other's laps without fearing animals.nikulukungu uko [It's a backyard] not bush

VICTORIA SUMAILI

MIND your own business. How many times have we caught the men with other women but we are yet to report to their wives?

SAMMUEL BANDA

THESE two are the reason why animals were not getting trapped.They were scaring animals away from traps

GATETE OLIVER

YES. If that man has a hunting certificate (which I think he has), we can help him file a claim against that prostituting couple and they will pay him.

AMIN ALEXANDRA MAKAYAMUCHUSU

