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ACHIEVABILITY OF MDGS UNDER THE INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of the 2008 inclusive government in Zimbabwe brought optimism that development and subsequently achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was imminent. Yieldingly, the inclusive government comprising of the three major political parties in Zimbabwe ended on 29 June 2013 after recording some successes in socio-economic improvements, notably arresting hyperinflation, recording modest economic growth, improved international cooperation and trade, food security, education and health delivery. The improvements have a bearing on the attainment of the 8 MDGs targets that Zimbabwe unanimously set to achieve by 2015. Clearly, the GNU avowal made inroads in MDG 2, 3 and 5. This paper noted that the contribution of the GNU to MDGs realization, while discernible, was limited both by internal and external factors such as politicking, ill-advised policies, corruption, debt crisis, colonial legacy, natural disasters, financial crisis among other issues. This paper challenges the post GNU government to maximize on abundant natural resources, GNU successes and limitations to devise major structural reforms to sustain and help meeting the remaining MDGs targets by 2015. A more robust, bottom-up and multi-dimensional approach that includes good governance targets is prescribed to the post-2015 agenda gaining momentum in Zimbabwe and internationally.

INTRODUCTION

The new millennium era saw world leaders striking a landmark Declaration poised to turn around the globe, through focusing development attention on the poor. The MDG framework has helped to raise global consciousness about the multiple dimensions of poverty and development on earth. Accordingly, developing countries have given priority to poverty reduction and streamlined the MDGs in their development policies and plans. In Zimbabwe, the MDGs coincided with economic meltdown, when the once vibrant economy was tumbling due to the socio-economic and political crisis in the new millennium. By the year 2007, Zimbabwe under the leadership of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU

PF) party had slipped into deep political and economic lethargies that saw her becoming the largest exporter of human beings in Southern Africa. On the 15th of September 2008, the three political protagonist parties in Zimbabwe namely: ZANU PF and the two Movements for Democratic Change (MDC) formations entered into a historic Global Political Agreement (GPA) which gave birth to the inclusive government affectionately known as the Government of National Unity (GNU) to end political and economic impasse of the new millennium (Dziva et al 2013). It is this GNU that rekindled hope and revived socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. This paper will therefore encapsulate the extent to which modest economic growth recorded under GNU was balanced with human security, challenges and the prospects for attainment of MDGs in Zimbabwe. This is opposed to previous research focused on the extent to which GPA/GNU provisions were implemented in Zimbabwe (CISOMM 2013; Dziva et al 2013).

The post GNU investigation invokes, particularly the new ZANU PF government elected on 31 July 2013 to reaffirm its commitment to the attainment of the MDGs' unmet targets by 2015. The results of this paper, together with MDGs reports and assessments will also inform the post-2015 discussions in Zimbabwe, and offer an augmented participatory action, and multi-dimensional pro-poor development approach. This paper is organized as follows; it starts with history and theorisation of MDG development framework. This is followed by socio-economic development review in Zimbabwe from independence to the 2008 GNU accord. After this segment, MDGs progress by each Goal will be reviewed under the GNU government. From there on, challenges to attainment of the MDGs are unearthed, with the prospects for their advancement under post GNU government being visioned. The final segment concludes the paper with suggestive plans in the post international MDG era.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND MDGS PHENOMENON

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 by 192 UN member states was a signal of States' renewed commitment to human development. The MDGs framework falls within the human security concept which was developed after the cold war to concentrate on alleviating-when possible-eradicating the insecurities that plaque human lives. To this end, the UN Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report is considered a milestone publication in the field of human security, with its argument that ensuring 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity (UNDP 1994). Human security concept contrasts with the traditional notion of state security, which concentrates primarily on safeguarding the integrity and robustness of the state and thus has only an indirect connection with the security of the human beings who live in these states (Heyns and Stefiszn 2006). In recognition of this, the Millennium Declaration included quantifiable targets to motivate the international community to act swiftly in improving livelihoods of the poor as opposed to state security centred development. The human security approach informs this study as it directs attention to individual and takes the multiple sources of insecurity such as poverty, diseases, illiteracy, mortality and environmental degradation that may impact upon a state, its citizens and other temporary sojourners into account (Dziva and Kusena 2013). This paper will concentrate on the impact of the 2008 GNU on the 8 MDG goals, which all fall under these forms of human security concept; economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security and community security.

The MDGs were adopted against a poor African record in development prior to the new millennium. Regionally, Southern Africa had the largest number of people living in absolute poverty, i.e. US $1 or less per day, soaring from 217 million in 1990 to 290 million in 2000 (ECA 2005). Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that 780 million people were undernourished between 1997 and 1999. Against such a background, the UN General Assembly after some series of meetings and declarations in the 20th century adopted the MDGs at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in September 2000. In 1996, development ministers from member states of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) came up with a report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, visioning development trajectory in the 21st century, through broad strategic framework aimed at realizing seven goals drawn from the resolutions of international conferences and summit meetings (OECD 1996). States, civil society and experts from development agencies came up with quantified targets for each goal and identified a set of 21 indicators for measuring progress (Devarajan et al 2002). Finally, the UN General Assembly incorporated most of the international development goals in the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, while setting new targets for reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger, increasing access to improved water sources, improving the lives of slum dwellers, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other major diseases.

Ostensibly, the UN Millennium Declaration was mooted to offer a new drive and opportunity to alleviate poverty and reverse the deterioration in human developments. This augured well with the vision of the 2008 GPA, where parties declared in the preamble to resolve permanently the challenges faced by Zimbabwe and the multiple threats to the wellbeing of Zimbabweans (GPA 2008:1). By themselves, MDGs represents the international community's commitment to provide an accountable framework and global partnership for progressively eradicating suffering in all its dimensions. With this Declaration, developing countries are required to prepare bold national strategies to achieve the MDGs for making measurable improvements in the lives of the world's poorest citizens. Most developing governments have concentrated on certain MDGs peculiar and critical to their situations. The Zimbabwean government identified Goals 1 (Eradicate poverty and hunger), 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) and 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) to be the nation's priorities. Of these chosen Goals, targets for goal 3 and 6 are on track to be achieved, while targets for Goal 1 are far to be reached, as poverty is not declining proportionately with growth in Zimbabwe. This paper will however focus on all the 8 MDGs in the sense that they are all important.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE PRIOR GNU (1980 -2008)

The catastrophic economic decay of Zimbabwe in the new millennium is an antecedent of the 20th century. Paradoxically, when Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain in 1980, it was economically better off and had a vibrant economy in the region. Ironically, the legacies of the colonial social resource inequalities were haunting the Zimbabwean social development parity. Defiantly, government had generous social sector expenditure in 1980s, which saw expansion of access to health care and education. For instance, during the first five years of independence (1981-1985), the expansion rates were 61% at primary schools and 63% at secondary school level (UNDP 2000). Regressively, the 1990s represented new and enormous challenges to socio-economic development. The chief culprit was the shift from the socialist 'welfarist' to the neo-liberal economic model under the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Evidently, the SAPs were a development package that came with retrenchments that enhanced the vulnerability of workers, reduced public expenditure on social services to mention but a few.

The 1997 decision by the Zimbabwean government to pay $Z50 000.00 gratuities to liberation war fighters exacerbated Zimbabwe’s economic challenges to crisis. Sachikonye (2006) further posits Zimbabwe's intervention in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 as another expensive expedition, with some estimates putting the average daily cost at US $1 million. Such military expedition resulted in the ballooning of the budget deficit, an increase in inflation and the erosion of real earnings. The confluence of these issues manifested on 14 November 1997, when the Zimbabwean dollar lost 74% of its value (Bond 2007). Consequently, both domestic and foreign debt grew, swallowing up urgently needed resources for key social amenities. A key aspect of the crisis was the rapid decline of the economy, characterised by, amongst other things: steep declines in industrial and agricultural productivity; historic levels of hyperinflation; the informalisation of labour; the dollarization of economic transactions; displacements; and critical erosion of livelihoods (Raftopoulos 2009:203). Intrinsically, poverty levels increased, making it difficult for many families to afford basic needs. Industry was not also spared from the effects of the economic crisis. For instance, in the textile and clothing sector, in 2000 alone, an estimated 400 companies collapsed resulting in 10,000 job losses (Sachikonye 2006). Real wages fell from an index of 100.6 between 1985 and 1990 to 86.0 between 1996 and 1999; employment growth declined from an index of 2.4 to 1.5 and inflation increased from 11.6% to 32.6% during these years; poverty levels increased from 40.4% in 1990/91 to 63% in 1996 (Kanyenze et al 2001).

As economic development declined in Zimbabwe, so did the responsive capacity of the economy to MDG cause such that by 2003, many families were food insecure and poverty stricken. Even with the proliferation of NGOs concentrating on human security issues to complement the state, the situation continued to deteriorate. The violent fast track land reform, forced evictions, corruption and abuse of human rights saw Zimbabwe being isolated in the international system. It is this isolation and sanctions, together with the ensuing poor image created of Zimbabwe’s governance and cautionary and unmandated restrictions placed upon financial transactions, that ZANU PF blame for Zimbabwe’s economic collapse (CISOMM 2013:24). All the same, the 2000 land reform programme resulted in food insecurity and loss of jobs and shelter for farm workers, as they were evicted by occupiers. The UN Country Analysis Report (2012) noted that maize production declined from 2.06 million tonnes in 2003 to an estimated 1.16 million tonnes in 2007. In 1995, 2002, and 2005, the tonnage did not reach a million (Ibid). This was a blow to the MDGs that the government had committed itself to in September 2000. At the end of 2006, the average minimum wage for agriculture and domestic workers was Z$2,800, only 3% of the Food Datum Line, while the average wage of Z$57,000 in the same period was 16.6% of the Poverty Datum Line (Raftopoulos 2009:219). By the year 2008, most schools and hospitals had closed, while teachers and hospital staff emigrated to better economies, regionally or internationally. During this era the fight to meet MDGs was somewhat peripheral to the government which was largely concerned with its survival in a hostile political and economic environment. To harness this catastrophic economic decline and political impasse, ZANU PF and the MDCs factions entered into a GNU brokered by the then South African President Thabo Mbeki and SADC as the guarantor after the disputed 2008 elections. Among other things, the accord was meant "resolving once and for all the… political and economic situations" of Zimbabwe (GPA 2008). This was more of reaffirming a commitment to the attainment of the MDGs by the Zimbabwean government after 8 years of socio-economic and political retrogression.

PROGRESS TOWARDS ATTAINING MDGS UNDER THE GNU ERA

Zimbabwe entered into the GNU faced with grave developmental challenges across all sectors, following an exceptional economic crisis and social decline between 2000 and 2008. The inclusive government managed to stabilise the economy through the pro-poor Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programmes (STERP I and II) and the 2011–2015 Medium Term Plan (MTP). The GNU spearheaded economic turn-around from the low base of the years before 2009, though the economic recovery remained fragile. In particular, the introduction of multi-currency in 2008 managed to bring down inflation from world record and lured paltry business investors. Consequently, the competition in business brought down prices on food, goods and services crucial for the attainment of MDGs. This economic development slowly trickled down to the poor as there was improvement in social sector budget. Evidently, the health sector saw a total of USD 21.6 million being disbursed during the first half of 2012 to 4 central, 6 provincial and 9 district hospitals as well as 11 mission hospitals for upgrading and purchase of medicines in 2012 (AEO 2012). Though this 2012 national budget of 9.6% allocated to the health sector in 2012 was significantly below the Abuja Declaration target of 15% (MDGS Status Report 2012), it was an improvement from the pre-GNU era, where the budgets were close to nothing. Such responsive budgets extremely helped the poor households to access basic needs. Though Zimbabwe is far from achieving MDGs, some progress has been made courtesy of the GNU. Considering that before the forging of the inclusive government in 2008, it was crisis in health, education, employment, environment protection and international cooperation, this progress by the GNU are commendable.

Brief progress on each of the 8 MDGs in Zimbabwe is as follows:

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 1 calls for reduction by half the number of people living on less than $1 per day. Globally, this MDG target to halve the proportion of people living in "extreme poverty" was met in 2010, five years before the deadline. However, world statistics are not a true reflection of the situation in countries like Zimbabwe where poverty remains widespread. According to the UN Country Analysis Report (2010) and the Zimbabwe MDG Status Report (2010), poverty in Zimbabwe is high with approximately 72 per cent of the population living below the poverty datum line. The economic growth under the GNU has not proportionally resulted in reduction of poverty, due to the lack of better and stable employment opportunities in the country. However, the percentage of food-insecure rural households declined steadily with the onset of economic recovery from 15% in 2010-2011 to 12% in 2011-2012 (MDGs Progress Report 2012). Nevertheless, the vagaries of weather and dependence on rain fed agriculture under GNU created more food-insecure rural dwellers in Matebeland provinces and other semi-arid parts of Zimbabwe.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

This goal strives to ensure that all children, boys and girls alike, can complete a full course of primary schooling. According to estimates, the number of out-of-school children has fallen to about 60 million from 108 million in 1990 (UNICEF 2003). In Zimbabwe, although there have been variations in Net Enrolment Ratios (NER), the GNU has made positive trends on this Goal. In 2011, NER declined from 91% to 87% in 2009 (MDGs Progress Report 2012). However, there is very little gender or geographical disparity found at primary school level. Completion rates have not been as high as NER, with rates at 68% in 2005 and rising to 82% in 2009 (Ibid).

The GNU through the ministry of education made sure tuition fees in government schools remained generally low for all children to be able to pay. Also, revitalisation of the Basic

Education Assistance Module (BEAM) was another key MDG 2 achievement, which assisted 514,000 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) to access education through fee payments (UNICEF 2012). However, development levies at times have proven to be impediments to the provision of education as they were charged beyond the reach of many parents. Through the Education Transition Fund, 13 million text books were donated to all 5,600 primary schools, something that improved the textbook-pupil ratio from 1:10 to 1:1 (UNICEF 2011). Consequently, investments in education sector resulted in a marked improvement in examination pass rates, with an average pass rate for Grade 7 jumping from 20.11% in 2009 to 28.89% in 2011, 31,5% in 2012 and 32,2% in 2013 (AEO 2013). This sustained Zimbabwe's literacy rates that have been traditionally high, rising from 85% in 1994 to 99% in 2011 amongst 15-24 year olds (MDGs Report 2012).

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

The goal aims to eliminate gender disparity in schools at all levels. According to the MDG Status Report (2012) this Goal has been achieved. Zimbabwe is no exception to this achievement, gender parity at primary and secondary school levels with respect to enrolment, attendance, and completion rates has been achieved (Ibid). It is however pathetic to note that gender disparities still exist at the tertiary level and in political participation, although this is being gradually improved by the affirmative action under way. As mentioned in the MDGs Status Report (2012), the percentage of women managers in the private sector was only 20% in 2011, and the percentages of female Parliamentarians and female councillors has remained stagnant for the past two years at an average of 20%. Regardless of the fact that women are the majority, who contribute a considerable share in rural economy, their meaningful participation and representation in decision-making processes is still very low (Dziva et al 2013:1).The 2013 elections in Zimbabwe has continued to show a declining number of women in Council, Parliament and Senate, a result of socio-economic and political challenges within and outside institutions that perpetuate inequality and protect the privileges enjoyed by men in politics. Nevertheless, many targets of Goal 3 are likely to be achieved by 2015.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 4 seeks to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds. In Zimbabwe, maternal mortality rate was at 960 per 100000 live births in 2012, and the highest in the world (MDG Progress Report 2012). There is need for vital immunization, water and sanitation programmes so as to achieve substantial reductions. Rural children also tend to have a higher mortality rate than their urban counterparts, something which must also be taken into account in working towards 2015 and beyond. Intrinsically, this Goal is likely to be missed by a wide margin in Zimbabwe. This is as a result of the dilapidated health facilities, poor budgeting and dwindling corporate support to the health sector.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

The objectives of this goal are to reduce maternal mortality ratio by three quarters and achieve universal access to reproductive health by women. Globally, the number of women dying of pregnancy and childbirth related complications has almost halved in the last 20 years (WHO 2012). However, global progress does not mean that Africa is equally on track to achieve the targets (Devarajan et al 2002). Zimbabwe is not likely to meet MDG 5 targets as maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has worsened dramatically in the new millennium According to (2010/2011) Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey, the maternal mortality rate stands at 960 deaths per 100,000 live births (MDGs Progress Report 2012). This is significantly higher than the rate of 612 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005-2006 (ZimStats 2012). The top four causes of death from 2010-2011 were post-partum haemorrhage, sepsis, pre-eclampsia and malaria (Ibid).

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

The goal aims to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and incidences of malaria and other diseases, ensure access to HIV treatment by 2015. In Zimbabwe, although HIV/AIDS remains the number one killer amongst children under-five, the percentage of adults aged 15-49 who are HIV positive has declined from 18% in 2005-2006 to 15% in 2010-2011 under the GNU (MDGs Progress Report 2012), owing to many reasons, among them, the devising of Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP), to guide the national response towards achieving zero new infections by 2015.

In the fight for Malaria, government in 2012 secured approximately 500 000 USAID long-lasting insecticidal nets for free mass and routine distribution to complement the Global Fund procurement of 800 000 nets (Ibid). As such malaria which was the reason behind hospital admissions in 2009, declined by 64% based on 2000 levels. According to the MDGs Progress Report (2012), Tuberculosis incidences have also decreased from a peak of 782 per 100,000 people in 2007 to 633 per 100,000 people in 2010. However, the issue of access to HIV therapy is still a challenge for many Zimbabweans. Only 600 000 people received antiretroviral therapy against a total estimated figure of 1.3 million infected people as of 2009 (MDG Status Report 2010). Zimbabweans during the period under review continued to die and suffer from easily preventable and treatable conditions, such as, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, malnutrition, work injuries, hypertension, pregnancy related and perinatal complications, and mental health disorders.

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

The aims of goal 7 are to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and reverse the loss of environmental resources. In Zimbabwe, there have been some positive results in phasing out of ozone depleting substances, minimal carbon dioxide emissions, and gradual improvements in average access to improved sources of water from 61% in 2009 to 79% in 2010 (MDGs Progress Report 2012). However, issues such as deforestation and veld fires remain a problem, with the majority of Zimbabweans continuing to cut down trees wantonly for firewood without regulation. Further to that, safe drinking water, shelter and sanitation remain challenges that will see Zimbabwe missing the 2015 mark. The increase in unemployment has resulted in the increase in number of illegal miners of mainly gold and chrome, especially along the Great Dyke, and this has resulted in serious land degradation and siltation of water sources.

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Goal 8 covers a range of aspirations, such as the aim to "develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system" and "deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries" (MDGs Progress Report 2012). Unlike the other goals, Goal 8 does not have specific time-bound targets, making it more difficult to keep track of. In Zimbabwe stabilization of international relations were noticeable, though hampered by patronage under the GNU. The failure by Zimbabwean government to come up with a sound debt clearance strategy hampered its qualification for multi-lateral development assistance.

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MDGS IN ZIMBABWE

MDGs advancement during the GNU era was affected by weak economic performance even though GPA parties in Article 3 agreed to restore ‘economic stability and growth’ (GPA

2008). The stabilisation of the economy, courtesy of dollarization was mediocre as GDP growth averaged 9.5% during 2010-2011 (Biti 2013). The GNU was haunted by erratic power shortages, lack of capital for distressed industries, dilapidated infrastructure and lack of technology to do maximum production during its entire era. Subsequently, the manufacturing sector remained in crisis with decline of capacity utilisation from an average of 57% in 2011 to 44% in 2012 (AEO 2013). This was aptly noted by the then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai that the recovery process within industry has been hampered by power shortages, with Zimbabwe importing and generating only 1,100 megawatts against a requirement of 2,000 megawatts (VOA 2010). The GNU had no capacity to repair and revamp the industries technology wise, resulting in many companies closing and retrenching workers. For those in operation, the equipment was out-dated and had not been upgraded since the new millennium. Consequently, there were constant machinery breakdowns and poor-quality products, which failed to compete both locally and internationally.

The economic stabilisation failed to generate employment and to significantly reduce poverty among the Zimbabweans. 94% of paid employees in 2011 received an income equal to or below the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) for an average family of five, while 3 out of every 4 employed persons in Zimbabwe were classified as “vulnerable in employment” (MDGs Progress Report 2012). As a result, Zimbabwe has lost thousands of human resources through migration and could not achieve MDGs. The trivial growth under the GNU was also overshadowed by population growth which has ascended to 12.9 million from 11.6 million people in 2002 (ZimStats 2012). Furthermore, the economic growth recorded during the GNU period was never accompanied equally with income distribution and pro-poor policies that dealt with MDGs directly. Not only does high inequality inhibit economic growth, but it may also neutralize and even cancel out whatever positive impacts growth could have on poverty reduction. Considering what Devarajan et al, (2002) noted, that in a more economically equal society, fewer people live in poverty and there are fewer health and social problems, the unequal income distribution of the GNU was a blow to MDGs, and should it persist the prospects for translating any gains from economic growth into shared prosperity and meaningful poverty reduction will remain between a dream and a nightmare.

According to Dziva et al (2013), the GNU accord was entered into by parties for mileage, with absolutely nothing in common in terms of political ideologies and motivations. Though

GNU parties agreed in Article 16 of the GPA to work together for humanitarian aid and assistance, their policies were informed by political gimmick rather than economic recovery. Consequently, GNU parties frequently accused each other of distributing aid assistance on partisan grounds (CISOMM 2013). In 2012, the Zimbabwean Newspaper accused the Grain Marketing Board of distributing food aid under its grain loan scheme to ZANU-PF supporters at their offices in Chipinge. This was indirect discrimination to MDC supporters since such premises were inaccessible to MDC supporters. Also, the year 2012 saw a crackdown on legally operating humanitarian NGOs in Masvingo Province by the ZANU PF Provincial Governor Titus Maluleke, who believed they were working in the interest of the MDC opposition party. This ban was a blow to the quest to achieve MDGs by the GNU government, as many families were left food-insecure including those on HIV-AIDS feeding schemes. Such politicisation of resources saw many villagers failing to wean themselves from the poverty and hunger trap, hence contributing a lot to the failure to attain MDG 1 in Zimbabwe.

Africa has seen the proliferation of leaders who together with their sympathisers abuse human rights and embezzle State funds for their own personal use than for the welfare of their people. The real motives for external borrowing which included the need to provide infrastructure, create jobs and alleviating poverty was defeated as military dictators and cronies, as well as unscrupulous compradors embarked on looting spree (Ugolor and Atakpu, 2002). Under the GNU era, a majority of parliamentarians misappropriated US$50,000 allocated to them by government for community development in their constituencies, and nothing was done to punish them. This lawlessness contributes to poverty when officials flout the law and are not held accountable for their actions (Smith 2007:86). Zimbabweans lamented the lack of transparency and accountability on revenue flows and shareholding structure in the Zimbabwean Diamond mining. By the end of 2011, mineral exports accounted for 47% of total exports, led by platinum (43%), gold (28%) and diamonds (20%) but the proceeds did not benefit the nation due to corruption. For this reason Transparency International (2012), ranked Zimbabwe 163 out of 176 countries on the corruption index; the country had a score of 2.0 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean). Lawlessness, lack of transparency and accountability in the allocation of mining rights, distribution and use of revenue from mining was not conducive for investments and sound pro-poor social services.

Sequel to the above, bad policies which rocked the GNU were not healthy for MDGs attainment. The continued farm invasions – with ZANU PF's trademark violence and ruthlessness during the GPA affected human security, especially food security. In February 2009, more than 100 productive farms and 50 small holdings were raided, many at gunpoint, with regional governors, MPs, senators and high ranking officials forcing the owners to leave (CISOMM 2013). This was utter disregard to property rights, food security and welfare of farm workers, as they were bundled into army trucks and dumped in remote areas with no facilities or the means for survival. Consequently, they lost their property and their children dropped out of school; thereby increasing the number of school dropouts. Also, with the concentration on cash crop production by GNU, such as cotton and tobacco, Zimbabwe failed to make inroads in reducing hunger by 2015. Inherently, under the GNU tobacco production increased to 144.5 million kilograms (kgs) in 2012 up from 133 million kgs in 2011, while cotton production improved from about 250 000 tons in 2011 to about 350 000 tons in 2012 (AEO 2013).

The Indigenisation law is another policy that affected MDGs advancement during the GNU era. The so-called economic black empowerment policy sought to cede 51% of shares in foreign owned companies and banks to local people. In accordance with the Act, the regulations provide that every business with an asset value of or above US$500,000 must, within five years, 'cede a controlling interest of not less than 51% of the shares or interests therein to indigenous Zimbabweans. Not surprising, these regulations had an immediate and adverse impact on the investment climate in Zimbabwe and undermined all the efforts made until then to attract foreign investment. Unsurprisingly, Zimbabwe in 2011 attracted US$250 million of the US$55 billion that went into African economies (CISOMM 2013: 24). Though the figure was somewhat more than US$105 million received in 2010, it represented only 0.46% of inflows and compared poorly with the US$1 billion received by Zambia and Mozambique (Herald 2012). Also, the investor unfriendly indigenisation policy saw the economy experiencing structural challenges emanating from industries closure, retrenchments, limited resources and high cost of capital and uncertainties arising from policy inconsistencies. The Community Share Ownership Trust which saw mining communities countrywide being earmarked to receive US$10 million from big mining firms was marred with looting and corruption, resulting in the disappearance of funds, hence not benefiting the poor as envisaged.

The challenges that haunted the GNU in Zimbabwe have historical connotations. Debt burden weighed down efforts by GNU government to advance MDGs, as the little money they had was used to pay back the debt to Bretton Woods and western institutions. Zimbabwe at independence inherited debt from the colonial regime and borrowed from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for development. In 2011, Zimbabwean's total external debt was estimated at US$10.7 billion (113.5% of GDP), and US$10 billion at the end of 2012, with arrears of some 6.1 billion (Biti 2012). The GNU was saddled with a high debt overhang, which served as a key bottleneck to investment and capital inflows. Instead of subsidising the poor, the GNU was subsidizing rich States through repaying of these odious debts incurred to suppress natives by colonialists. In addition, efforts by the government to deal with the debt issue have not yet yielded tangible results, and as such the GNU did not receive much funding to relieve the severe liquidity crisis being faced.

When many people thought Zimbabwe needed to mend their relations with the West in fair trade, investment and aid, others thought otherwise. In actual fact, the GNU parties were divided on the need and ways to forge partnerships with the donor world. The MDC strived to mend relations, but ZANU PF had different patois as its leader Mugabe was on record saying, 'Zimbabwe will not be saved by any country or organisation, least of all Western. Let our partners in the inclusive government get that so we do not waste our efforts on useless initiatives. It is our mineral resources – all these helped by the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of our people which will turn this economy and country around' (Independent 2010). These utterances by the Zimbabwean President were after the visit by a delegation to the EU to discuss the issues of 'sanctions' (Ibid). The hope that the exploitation of diamonds in the Marange area would spur an economic recovery has not materialised, because revenue from Diamond mining was not making its way into the fisc (CISOMM 2013:25) due to corruption. The operations at the mines were also impervious to spearhead development. When the MDC partners in the inclusive were busy persuading EU to lift sanctions, their ZANU PF partner was busy telling the west to go hang. As such nothing materialised from these engagements and the achievements of MDG 8 and others which require aid largely remain a mirage.

Financial crisis and double standards by developed countries in honouring their pledges affected the Zimbabwean GNU to work towards attainment of the MDGs. The Millennium Summit of 2000 raised awareness of problems in Africa, and an unprecedented level of international commitment to provide aid for ending poverty and hunger in developing countries was mooted. The developed states anchored that, "We will assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development" (UNDP/UNICEF, 2002). Even with prodigious pledges most of developed countries like UK failed to honour and meet their agreed aid targets. According to Shar (2005), instead of the 0.7 % of GNP promised by European states, the amount has been around 0.2 to 0.4 %, about $100 billion short. This failure to fulfil the promises by European States can be attributed to the financial economic crisis of 2007- 08. UN Taskforce noted that global economic recession saw Official Development Assistance falling almost 3% to $133.5 billion in 2011, or around 0.31% of their aggregate Gross National Income (The Guardian 2012). This was also made worse by the failure of GNU to abide by the prescribed conditionality such as the democratic dispensation.

Despite the efforts made by the GNU government to halt the effects of HIV-AIDS and cancer diseases, the discernible effect of the former disease affect the quest to realize MDGs in Zimbabwe. According to UNAIDS (2008) there were roughly 33.4 million living with HIV, 2.7 million new infections of HIV, 2 million deaths from AIDS and approximately 7 out of 10 deaths for 2008 were in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that also has over two-thirds of adult HIV cases and over 90% of new HIV infections amongst children. AIDS affects different segments of society in different ways. For instance, children may have to care for an ill parent and therefore not be able to attend school which is somewhat a blow to MDG 1 and 2. In some instances, skilled parents succumb to AIDS leaving orphans and no one with experience and expertise in farming hence exposing the households to starvation. The loss of productive capacity among families affected by HIV/AIDS has a major impact on food production and nutritional well-being. To make matters worse, HIV/AIDS transmission rates and the progression of the disease tend to be higher in under-nourished populations, trapping them into a vicious cycle of hunger and disease. Moreover, HIV-AIDS and cancer related diseases gulped a considerable share of public expenditure, and accounted for bigger hospital admissions and outpatients visits under the GNU.

There is ample evidence of the threat that climate change poses, notably in the areas of achieving food security, growth and employment, as well as environmental management. Climate change severely compromise agricultural production – the backbone of Zimbabwe – and exacerbate poverty and food insecurity in many sub regions of the continent (ECA, 2008). Intrinsically the vagaries of weather have been an important factor in the poor performance of Zimbabwe’s heavily agro-based economy. Between 2008 and 2013, Zimbabwe was seriously affected by persistent droughts and desertification, which threatened more than one-third of its land area and undermined agro-pastoral activities that constitute a critical part of people’s livelihoods. The problems of escalating soil erosion, population growth, inequitable land distribution and poor farming methods often exacerbate declining fertility and persistent drought in Zimbabwe, leaving an array of food-insecure communities. Together with shortage of inputs, limited access to credits and high energy costs, Zimbabwe has suffered from high food prices which foreclosed the possibilities of meeting MDG 1 target 2 under the GNU era. The combined effects of these events threatened the very livelihoods of significant proportions and curtailed the prospects for broad-based Zimbabwean economic growth, poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection under the GNU.

In spite of the presence of the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) of 2002 to ensure the sustainable use and protection of Zimbabwe's environmental resources, many companies and local authorities continue to discharge untreated effluent into local streams, thereby endangering both flora and fauna. The principles of environmental sustainability as called for by MDG 7 have not been mainstreamed into national policies and programmes. More so, poaching of both flora and fauna is one of the worst environmental and security challenges that GNU administration faced in Zimbabwe. A total of 145 elephants, 91 buffaloes, 113 impala, 56 kudu, 42 zebras, and a rhino were poached in 2009 in Parks estates alone, with a total value of more than $2 million (MoENR, statistics 2009). Poaching activities were necessitated by the unlawful occupation of designated forest and wildlife conservancies by communities for the occupants’ livelihoods. According to the UN Country Analysis Report (2012), lack of incentives for proper management that are rooted in insecurity of tenure has left many of occupants with no option but to harvest these resources unsustainably. These constitute significant retrogression in terms of achievement of the environmental targets specified in MDG 7.

The MDG development framework has been criticised for being too general and sometimes viewed as a global, one-size-fits-all development framework, overlooking differences in the context and capacities of different countries (MDG Status Report 2012). The MDGs framework was also devised with minimal involvement of the developing states and consultation of the poor in particular. In this regard, there is lack of awareness and ownership among poor people which they sought to uplift. Criticisms are also being proclaimed for failing to focus MDGs on a multi-dimensional development paradigm, but only in social issues at the expense of the fundamental political side and the much sought sustainable economic development paradigm (MDG Status Report 2012). While the contra-argument is that governance underpins all MDGs, it is a fact that no concrete targets were set for these issues. There is need to also concentrate on political governance, economic productivity and employment creation such that the gains made are likely not to reverse in the post 2015 epoch. The MDGs are also hampered by lack of adequate monitoring due to the lack of timely and reliable quality data.

PROSPECTS FOR ATTAINMENT OF MDGS

Even though scholars are lukewarm on ZANU PF government's capacity to spearhead development, equating the anticipation as nothing other than expecting to get 'diesel from a rock' this paper envisages that ZANU PF's governance principles as reiterated in their election Manifesto of 2013 will ensure development and move the country out of poverty if implemented. Pessimists presage ZANU PF government is composed of recycled 'dead wood' who failed to turn around the economy during decades of President Mugabe's rule; as such they have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. Just a month after his inauguration in August 2013, President Mugabe has drawn ire for disregarding MDG 3 after appointing only three women to his 26 member cabinet of September 2013, a figure way below the 50% gender equity threshold stipulated in section 17 of the Zimbabwean Constitution.

However, the discovery of minerals and the continuous growth in the diamonds and platinum sector offers prospects for economic boom. The mining sector has become the leading export earner rising to US$2 billion in 2012 from US$1.8 billion in 2011, contributed to 16% in 2012 from 13% of GDP in 2011 (Kachembere 2013). Amid strong international demand for primary commodities, particularly platinum and gold, the Zimbabwean economy is tipped to grow and create employment if post-GNU government underpins higher production levels.

The anticipated recovery of mineral prices in 2013 combined with on-going investment in the sector, as well as the expected resumption of production of nickel and asbestos in 2013, will result in the mining sector growing by a projected 17.1% GDP growth in 2013 (AEO 2013). Considering that in East Asia between 1990 and 1999, the increase of GDP per capita by two-thirds, resulted in the greatest decline in poverty, from 27.6% to 14.2% -a nearly 50% decline (Devarajan et al 2002), Zimbabwe's projected growth will create employment and reduce poverty.

With the coming into force of a new 2013 constitutional dispensation entrenching economic and cultural rights and new 2013 ZANU PF government promises for democratic norms that foster participation, it is hoped that Zimbabwe will meet MDGs. When decision-making power is located close to poor communities, and the poor are organized to lobby for their interests, officials will be encouraged to respond to their needs (Smith 2007:102). As highlighted in the 2013 ZANU PF Election Manifesto, the roots of ZANU PF are in the people. 'These roots must be spread deep, wide and solid. The party and the people, the people and the party must have the same meaning, from the masses to the masses.' (ZANU PF Manifesto 2013:2). If implemented through education programs, public welfare, justice and human freedoms and doing away with repressive laws, Zimbabwe will meet most MDGs or miss few slightly. This approach ensures that the people for whom the MDGs are designed become agents of change to take ownership of their development rather than being mere recipients (Aleyomi 2013:15). If the ongoing anti- corruption drive by the Information Ministry is taken seriously in Zimbabwe, there will be greater accountability and fair distribution of resources towards poverty reduction.

The new government of ZANU PF should strive to honor their pro-poor policies in their 2013 election manifesto and star rallies ahead of the 31st July 2013 election, which President Mugabe and his ZANU PF party won resoundingly. On July 27 2013, whilst addressing the crowds in Bulawayo city, President Mugabe pledged to revive the industries, food security, create jobs and improving health, housing, urban transportation, infrastructure and the environment (ZANU PF Manifesto 2013:3). As such, projects such as the Mtshabezi Dam and other projects left behind by the GNU should be completed to ensure access of services by the poor. Focus however, should be centered on income distribution to poor folks in the periphery. The much celebrated enactment and promulgation of the indigenization laws which provide for cession of 51 percent of shares by all foreign owned companies to local Zimbabweans is also envisioned to ensure poverty eradication, if properly managed. Needless to say, the mist within indigenization and empowerment policy has enriched few individuals, scared away the much needed foreign direct investment and strained further the already fragile relations between Zimbabwe and the developed world. It is now upon the appointed development oriented Minister of Indigenization, Francis Nhema to coerce the legislature to revise the indigenization laws so much that they will serve the interest of the entire population. The successful co-hosting of the August 2013 United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) general assembly by Zimbabwe and Zambia is a prospect to tourism sector and ultimate development of Zimbabwe. The record attendance at the General Assembly will go a long way to market Zimbabwe's endowed God-given resources and wonders like Victoria Falls. The 20th session of the General Assembly saw the highest number of participants in the history of the UNWTO with 121 of the 154 member states attending together with 145 countries, 750 delegates and 900 participants from the media and private sector and 49 ministers. There is no doubt that Zimbabwe has been put on the tourism world map, a mileage in attracting many tourists and development aid. As reiterated by Sata (2013) the President of Zambia, "The outcome of the 20th session of the UNWTO General Assembly has opened up new and enormous possibilities for member states to make tourism contribute to the development of their economies and in the process improve the livelihoods of communities and individuals**" (**Mutemi & Chitumba 2013). Zimbabwe and Zambia reaffirmed to adopt new technology to ease visa applications and processing of goods, something in line with Goal 8. Such a vision and contributions of the august gathering will go a long way in poverty reduction, fostering global partnership and human development.

CONCLUSION

World leaders gathered in 2000 to craft MDGs that became the guiding development framework in the quest to do away with human insecurity. The eight goals focus attention on the poor and have made significant contributions to the socio-economic development of countries across the globe (MDG Status Report 2012). For Zimbabwe, the 2000 MDGs framework coincided with economic crisis that unfolded from the last decade of the 20th century up to 2008, when SADC brokered an inclusive government meant to *"create a genuine, viable, permanent, sustainable and nationally acceptable solution to the Zimbabwe situation"* (GPA 2008). Against this economic turmoil over an extended period in Zimbabwe, the ‘shaky’ GNU led to a slow but significant socio-economic development. Subsequently, progress has been made on some MDGs targets, while challenges still militate against the full realisation of other targets. Evidently, positive achievements by GNU government are from MDG 2 (universal primary education), MDG 3 (gender equality in schools) and MDG 6 on (HIV and AIDS). However, many unmet targets exist in MDG 1: (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), and MDG 4 and 5: (improve maternal and child mortality), these targets are unlikely to be met by the 2015 deadline. This failure was mainly due to challenges in GNU’s control than externally motivated. The fact that the GNU era was rocked with inherent political and economic uncertainties, hugely denied effective inroads in the attainment of MDGs.

The newly July 31 2013 elected ZANU PF government, private sector, civil society and the international community should continue mainstreaming MDGs targets into all development activities to ensure more targets are attained by 2015. Of importance to note however, is the fact that Zimbabwean government and stakeholders should actively take part in the on-going post-2015 Agenda meant to map the way forward in sustainable development. World leaders and Zimbabwe should device a new holistic approach which takes into cognisance critical problems that affect human security, be it of political, social or economic magnitude. In particular, the missing political face in the 2000 MDGs, especially human rights, peace and security issues should be embraced in the post-2015 Agenda. More so, a bottom up approach in ending development challenges can formulate concrete and measurable goals that will enormously make Zimbabwe and the whole world fit for human habitation. This article, also believes economic growth has a bearing on the achievement of MDGs, only if opportunities and income of growth support the human development of the poorest people. As such, the Zimbabwean government should strive to promote economic growth followed with employment and equitable distribution of income.

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