

# DATA USER-PRODUCER SYMPOSIUM REPORT

**Sharing Experiences and Best Practices**

*Using the Power of Data to Drive Transformative  
Development in Zimbabwe*



**10 - 13 June 2024  
Holiday Inn Hotel,  
Mutare, Zimbabwe**

# ABBREVIATIONS

CGD	Citizen-Generated Data
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
DFDI TWG	Data for Development and Innovation Technical Working Group
DFDI	Data for Development and Innovation
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DQUAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Gender Equality Accelerator
GEWE	Gender Equity and Women Empowerment
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JWPs	Joint Work Plans
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NANGO	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations
NDS1	National Development Strategy 1
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMEP	National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
POTRAZ	Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small to Medium scale Enterprises
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WAG	Women's Action Group
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZNCC	Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the proceedings and key recommendations made during the Data- User- Producer Symposium organized jointly by ZIMSTAT and the United Nations, operating under the DFDI-TWG in Mutare from 10 to 13 June 2024 under the theme: **Using the Power of Data to Drive Transformative Development in Zimbabwe.**

The primary goal of the Symposium was to bring together stakeholders to facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing on how best to produce and use data in Zimbabwe to effectively address Zimbabwe's development priorities, as captured in the first National Development Strategy (NDS1) and its contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Symposium proceedings were in the form of keynote presentations, presentations by experts, panel discussions, plenary sessions, breakout sessions, group discussions and networking opportunities to improve participants' understanding of the data production process, initiating communication among data producers and users, coming up with ways to improve the country's data ecosystem and explore the role of data in sustainable development. Participants were drawn from Government ministries, departments, and agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. By the end of the workshop, participants demonstrated enhanced understanding of how issues such as – limited resources; data collection discrepancies; and inadequate human skills – affect data production and usage and the impact on national development. The DFDI TWG was restructured, DFDI clusters developed Joint Work Plans and available data on SDGs was reviewed.

*“The **primary goal of the symposium** was to bring together stakeholders to facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing on **how best to produce and use data in Zimbabwe** to effectively address Zimbabwe's development priorities”.*

Key recommendations included: collaboration between DFDI and ZIMSTAT should continue; budgets be drawn up to fund DFDI clusters Joint Work Plans; ZIMSTAT to share Data Quality Framework and Data Validation Procedures among producers and users; establishment of a central data repository and training and information sharing on effective data collection, analysis and utilization should be ongoing. Recommendations for more funding for data production, legislative amendments, and investment in information and communication technology were also made to address the challenges within Zimbabwe's data ecosystem.

The impact of limited human and technological resources and organisational operating systems on data production was highlighted. Concern over data gaps particularly gender disaggregated data and the exclusion of data gathered outside of social data collection parameters was raised. Overall, the symposium made extensive information and knowledge sharing on data production and usage among stakeholders possible.

# INTRODUCTION

ZIMSTAT and the United Nations, operating under the DFDI -TWG collaboratively organised the 7th Data User-Producer symposium titled ***Using the Power of Data to Drive Transformative Development in Zimbabwe***. The four-day event was held in Mutare from Monday, 10 June to Thursday, 13 June 2024 under the theme: *'Data User-Producer Forum: Sharing Experiences and Best Practices'*. The Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Manicaland, Honourable Advocate Misheck Mugadza officially opened the symposium. The goal of the symposium was to effectively address Zimbabwe's development priorities, as captured in the first National Development Strategy (NDS1) and its contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by facilitating dialogue and knowledge sharing to strengthen data collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in Zimbabwe.

Over the course of the four-day symposium, data producers, users, academia, and development partners engaged in discussions and reflections that centred on four sub-themes, a sub-theme for each day. Each sub-theme built upon the previous day's discussions. The first sub-theme was *comprehending the data production landscape; followed by facilitating dialogue between data users and producers; then enhancing the data ecosystem through partnerships and collaboration; and ended with exploring the role of data in achieving sustainable development.*

The programme enabled a comprehensive exploration of the data ecosystem, fostering deeper understanding and collaboration among stakeholders. The symposium employed various engagement formats that included keynote presentations, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities for participants.



The programme also succeeded in initiating meaningful dialogue among stakeholders. Stakeholders gained a comprehensive overview of the data ecosystem in Zimbabwe, and shared experiences and best practices.

This symposium report provides an extensive account of proceedings, capturing the richness of discussions, action points, and outcomes that emerged from the engagement. The report is a valuable resource, summarising key takeaways, recommendations, and next steps agreed upon by the participants. Additionally, it provides a foundation for future activities and collaborations.

The symposium documents that include, the concept note, programme, presentations, and list of participants, are in the annexure. The documents provide detailed information of presentations that prompted symposium discussions and are ideal for further reference and review of discussions, insights, and outcomes that emerged during the symposium.

# BACKGROUND

*“The **User-Producer symposia** are important in bringing together diverse stakeholders to **share experiences, best practices, find solutions to data challenges**”.*

Over the years, ZIMSTAT has organized a series of User-Producer symposia. The inaugural symposium took place in 1987. The symposia serve as forums for data users and producers to convene and address matters pertaining to data production, analysis, and utilisation in Zimbabwe. Initially, symposia were held at five-year intervals. During the 2020 symposium, participants suggested a reduction to the period between symposia from five to three years, to align with rapidly evolving technological and statistical demands, hence the proposal to have the latest symposium in 2024.

A coordinated approach to data issues in Zimbabwe requires sustained and multi-faceted efforts from various stakeholders, including government, private sector, academia, civil society, and international development partners. Therefore, the User-Producer symposia are important in bringing together diverse stakeholders to share experiences, best practices, find solutions to data challenges and afford ZIMSTAT – the mandated data producer by the government – an opportunity to interact and coordinate with stakeholders.





## Symposium Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The **symposium objectives** were in line with activities listed under the overall theme to facilitate:

- > Sharing of experiences and best practices in data production and analysis.
- > Promoting open dialogue between users and producers of statistics.
- > Discussing challenges and opportunities in data utilisation.
- > Exploring innovative approaches to data visualisation and communication.
- > Promoting evidence-based decision-making in Zimbabwe.
- > Evaluating progress made in the implementation of recommendations made at previous symposia.
- > Recommending strategies for efficient delivery of statistical information, and
- > Identifying priority areas of statistical delivery systems in line with the modernisation drive.

The **expected outcomes** from the symposium included:

- > Strengthened data ecosystem and infrastructure in Zimbabwe.
- > Development of best practices and guidelines for data production, analysis, and utilisation
- > Increased use of data in decision-making by policymakers and development planners.
- > Strengthened data dissemination and sharing best practices.
- > Enhanced collaboration and partnerships among data stakeholders.
- > Identification of data gaps and challenges.
- > Development of strategies to address data gaps and challenges in the Zimbabwean context, and
- > Increased use of innovative technologies and methodologies in data production and analysis.



### Location and symposium dates

The workshop took place at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Mutare, Zimbabwe, from Monday, **10 June**, to Thursday, **13 June 2024**.

### Attendance

Participants from government, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, public and private sectors, attended the symposium. The full list of participants can be found in the attendance register in the annexure



# OFFICIAL OPENING



Hon. Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution represented by the Director for Economic Affairs and Investments, **Mr Munyaradzi Rubaya**, delivered the symposium opening remarks.

The symposium was officially opened by Honourable **Advocate Misheck Mugadza**, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Manicaland. In his address, the minister highlighted the crucial contribution of data towards Zimbabwe realising the 2030 vision, particularly with regard to devolution and economic transformation. He emphasized the need for user-friendly data, timely dissemination, and disaggregated information to ensure inclusivity. The minister expressed gratitude towards development partners for co-funding and co-organising the workshop with ZIMSTAT, before he officially declared the symposium open, and wished for productive deliberations.



# REMARKS



**Mrs Miranda Tabifor**, UNFPA Country Representative and DFDI co-chair, delivered remarks on behalf of **Mr Edward Kallon**, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. She accentuated the vital role of data in driving development and innovation. She acknowledged the significant contributions of the technical working group in promoting progress. She commended the working group's efforts in harnessing the power of data to achieve sustainable development goals. Mrs Tabifor reiterated the importance of data-driven decision-making and the need for continued collaboration to ensure data-driven development in Zimbabwe.



**Ms Fatou Lo**, UN Women Country Representative, stressed the critical role of data and statistics in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. She pointed out that evidence-based policies and programmes rely on accurate data. She noted the importance of data in assessing impact and promoting accountability. On the other hand, she decried the alarming gap in gender data, noting that only half of the required data was available to monitor SDG 5 globally. She warned that without concerted efforts to accelerate gender data financing and action, it may take an additional twenty two years to close existing gender data gaps, therefore, the need for urgent action to achieve the 2030 goals.

# REMARKS



Keynote remarks were delivered by representatives of the United Nations and ZIMSTAT. **Mr Aluwisio Mukavhi**, Acting Director General of ZIMSTAT, highlighted the significance of data in national development and stressed the need to modernise the National Statistical System (NSS) by adopting modern technology and using alternative data sources. He reaffirmed ZIMSTAT's commitment to producing high-quality statistics that meet international standards while at the same time remaining relevant to Zimbabwe. He emphasised the importance of accurate data in informing decision-making and development.



**Mr John Mafarikwa**, Chairman of the ZIMSTAT board, noted the crucial role that the agency plays as the primary source of official statistics in the country. The agency produces high-quality data that informs policy and decision-making. He emphasised the agency's critical role of coordinating the National Statistical System (NSS), which encompasses various stakeholders that include statistics producers, data suppliers, users, and research institutions. Mr Mafarikwa underscored the importance of investing in statistics production, open dialogue, and collaboration to support development agendas and drive progress in the country.

# DAY ONE:

## MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024



## Overview

Participants conducted a comprehensive review of Zimbabwe's data production systems by examining the institutions, processes, and mechanisms responsible for generating and disseminating statistical data. Presentations were made by officials from ZIMSTAT and various Government ministries, departments, and agencies. The presentations facilitated productive dialogue between data users and producers while the examination of data production systems laid the foundation for further discussions on topics such as the data user-producer interface, partnerships, and collaboration for sustainable development. The list of presentations made alongside a practical session were: *Data Production in Zimbabwe, Understanding Data Themes and ZIMSTAT Divisions, The role of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system in Zimbabwe, and Harnessing the role of administrative data in the National Statistical System*. The programme included a practical session on **Accessing and Navigating Data Portals in Zimbabwe**.



## Discussions

Discussion on the data production landscape in Zimbabwe indicated that the country had made significant progress in production of data on demography, health, economics, food security, climate change, peace and security among other sectors. However, significant gaps, particularly in gender-disaggregated data were noted. These gaps fell into three broad categories namely: (i) resource and capacity constraints; (ii) data quality and methodology issues; and (iii) regulatory, ethical, and social challenges.

**Resource and capacity constraints** included inadequate resources, time, and skills to produce the required data. Resource constraints had resulted in some ministries failing to keep up to-date with capturing administrative data.

**Data quality and methodology issues** related to data quality being compromised by methodological limitations and difficulties in measuring complex concepts that include gender based violence.

**Regulatory, ethical, and social challenges** related to ethical considerations, political and social sensitivities, and legal and regulatory restrictions that made it difficult for data producers to find and access data. Furthermore, lack of data sharing agreements between Government departments was also cited as a major stumbling block to data production.

Participants agreed that addressing the challenges required careful planning, resource allocation, and strategic partnerships to ensure data quality and relevance for delivery of high-quality data that meet user needs and support informed decision-making.

## Gender-disaggregated data

Zimbabwe's efforts towards gender equality was recognized, but significant gaps in gender-disaggregated data, particularly regarding GBV, early child marriage, and sexual violence was bemoaned. In response, ZIMSTAT acknowledged that in order to close the gaps, better data collection and analysis were crucial. Technical and financial support was required to improve data collection and analysis. Collaboration between organisations implementing gender programmes and data producers were necessary to bridge the existing data gaps and inform targeted solutions.

Data Disaggregation, which is the breaking down of data into smaller subgroups, categorising it by factors such as age, gender, location, disability status, religion and other relevant characteristics; was identified as important by participants. It was noted that disaggregation was essential for deeper understanding of the unique experiences and needs of various groups, adding that this would enable the drawing up of targeted and effective policies and programmes that address specific challenges and disparities.

Symposium participants noted with concern that only half of the data needed to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was currently available, spotlighting a significant data gap posing challenges to accurately track and assess progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The importance of exploring and leveraging on alternative and innovative sources of data such as Citizen-Generated Data (CGD), Big Data, Social Media Data, and other non-traditional data sources was emphasised and recommended as alternative data sources that could provide valuable insights and help fill data gaps to improve SDG monitoring and decision-making.

## National Population Data Bank

Participants called for the establishment of a publicly accessible National Population Data Bank that would be a centralized repository that provided accurate and up-to-date population data to all relevant stakeholders; hosted by ZIMSTAT. In addition, it was recommended that all data repositories should be linked to the ZIMSTAT website. It was noted that various data repositories existed in isolation which made it difficult to access and utilise the data. The proposed National Population Data Bank would connect these data sources, thus facilitating easier access and promoting data-driven decision-making.

## Lack of coordination in data collection systems

Discrepancies in multiple data sets particularly in relation to climate, health, and economic indicators was underscored as inconsistencies that needed to be addressed. Participants indicated that these disparities could have arisen because of lack of coordination among disparate data collection systems.

Participants expressed concern over delays in receiving vital statistics and civil registration data. They urged ZIMSTAT to develop and coordinate a strategy that would ensure the timely collection, analysis, and dissemination of vital statistics and civil registration data to support informed decision-making. A notable shortcoming presented was on the documentation of births and deaths. It was noted that some women resorted to giving birth at home, and such births sometimes went unrecorded. On the other hand, some traditional leaders were said to be allowing burials to take place in rural areas without any form of documentation of the deceased being availed.

ZIMSTAT was urged to urgently accelerate its adoption of big data analysis and digital transformation as this would go a long way in addressing gaps in data production.



# DAY TWO:

## TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2024



## Overview

The second day of the Symposium focused on encouraging data producers and users to work together. Data users include policymakers, development practitioners, and business leaders. The deliberations centred on improving data quality, relevance, and utilisation in Zimbabwe. Various users shared their data usage experiences and best practices, identified data gaps, and proffered innovative solutions. The interactions enabled data users to provide feedback and engage with producers on the need for accurate and timely data for SDGs monitoring by identifying existing data gaps and availability across different clusters. *The list of presentations made was: Data User Insights: Understanding the Needs and Perspectives of Key Stakeholders; Data Gaps and Needs in Zimbabwe; and The Changing Landscape: Innovation in Data Production, Dissemination and Use.*



## Discussions

The plenary discussions were comprehensive and built upon the previous day's conversations. The upcoming 2025 Economic Census, the Census Statistical Act, disaster data, and gender-based violence data were some of the topics that were discussed. Discussions focused on data utilisation, gaps in available data from a user perspective, and proposed solutions to close the gaps. Overall, the proceedings sought to improve data production and utilisation to inform decision-making and drive development.

### Scope 2024 Economic Census

A presentation on an Economic Census scheduled to be undertaken in 2024 stimulated discussion around legislation governing censuses. Participants sought

clarity on several issues. The Economic Census is to be undertaken in terms of the Census and Statistics Act [Chapter 10:29] of 2007. Discussions emanating from the presentation revolved around the scope of the census, particularly whether it would include small unregistered enterprises. It was clarified that the Economic Census would encompass all economic enterprises including small and medium enterprises regardless of the nationality of the owners. It was stated that online businesses would also be captured in the census which would be household based. Participants were pleased to learn that the census would be all-encompassing because small and medium enterprises contribute significantly towards the country's economic growth, employment, and GDP. It was noted that omitting SMEs from the census would present an incomplete economic picture that would potentially result in skewed policy decisions and resource allocation due to inadequate information.



## Inter Ministry data sharing agreements necessary

Participants agreed on the need for data sharing agreements among Government departments to facilitate easy access to data. The Ministry of Health and Child Care was cited as an example of a Ministry where it was difficult to access data. The unavailability of data during disasters was a significant concern. Participants called for more investment in technology for real time disaster management. The Ministry of Health and Child Care reported that it had developed a data sharing policy which is currently in draft form. The Ministry has an epidemiology and severance department which provides data on disasters. The need to come up with a multi-hazard integrated system was noted. It was also noted that disasters do not require surveys because they are unpredictable. Data on disasters was required in real time to save lives in the first hour of occurrence. Fragmented disaster data from different sources was difficult to compile. Therefore, a call was made for the production of Geospatial disaster data that was sector specific and real time data on food security.

The absence of data sharing agreements was identified as a major obstacle in Zimbabwe's data ecosystem. Government departments faced challenges sharing data among themselves, which created bottlenecks in accessing data. Challenges in interdepartmental data sharing hinder effective collection, analysis, and utilisation of data, leading to data duplication, inconsistent quality, and limited accessibility which ultimately hindered data-driven decision-making. Establishing data sharing agreements among government departments was crucial to facilitate seamless data exchange, integration, and the overall enhancement of the data ecosystem in Zimbabwe.

## Regular collection of GBV data

Participants called for regular collection of data on sexual harassment. The Ministry of Health and Child Care compiles data on GBV at one stop centres situated at hospitals around the country. On the other hand, the Ministry of Women Affairs engages partners to capture GBV data. However, there were concerns over restrictions on accessing Ministry of Health and Child Care data because of confidentiality issues regarding patients' details.

## Data from private producers missing from Official Statistics

Concerns were raised by WAG over the use of the phrase Official Statistics as it left out data from private producers. Participants also called for guidelines on how to produce statistics that met the official criteria to be put in place. ZIMSTAT responded that internationally accepted guidelines were followed in compiling official statistics. In order for statistics to be deemed official in Zimbabwe, the data had to be compiled according to the African Charter on Statistics; Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics; United Nations Statistics Department Guidelines on Production of Statistics; and Data Quality Assessment Framework guidelines.

## Challenges of incompatible data collection systems and formats

Zimbabwean government departments faced challenges in producing and utilising data effectively due to incompatible systems and formats, dual use of paper and electronic data collection forms, and limited analysis and utilisation of collected data. An example of a ministry with such challenges was the Ministry of Public Service and Social Welfare. Some government ministries were experiencing significant data gaps due to incomplete systems and pending implementations. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage was reported to have data gaps due to numerous information processing systems awaiting implementation. The Department of Immigration was cited as an example of a department poised to process data electronically to improve data management and availability.

## Closing the data gaps and inconsistencies

Despite these challenges, the Ministries are working to address data gaps and enhance data systems for better information management and decision-making. An undertaking by participants to integrate Data Scientists and M&E specialists into the organograms of government institutions was a significant step forward. Another positive development was that the government had already recruited for M&E positions in each ministry. The recruitments were expected to result in better data collection, analysis, and utilisation, ultimately resulting in a data-driven approach to governance.

In order to address the data gaps, it was suggested that ZIMSTAT should adopt a proactive approach by training organisations on data production and usage instead of organisations paying ZIMSTAT to do it for them. Inconsistencies in data standards were attributed to high staff attrition. By providing training and support, ZIMSTAT would help organisations enhance their data collection and management capabilities to produce high-quality data to contribute to a stronger national statistical system.

## Review definitions to be reflect current trends

Additionally, it was pointed out that poverty datum lines were not realistic as they left out what was being experienced on the ground, thus creating problems when designing programmes to cushion vulnerable social sectors. Further, the applicable definition of disability was described as inadequate by participants who noted that it left out numerous forms of disability.

## Gender statistics committee invisible

The invisibility of the gender statistics committee was flagged as a concern that often led to gender disaggregated data being unavailable. For example, WAG indicated that there was no data on unpaid care work. Concerns were also raised that DHS measure information of the 15-49 age group thus leaving out individuals outside the age range. Proposals were made to come up with current specific surveys which target women outside the 15-49 years age group.

To address concerns over unpaid care work, it was noted that ZIMSTAT was working with UNWOMEN to attach a module in the quarterly labour force survey to capture unpaid care work. In addition, a time use survey was to be undertaken by ZIMSTAT to take care of non-market oriented activities.

## Under reporting on SDGs

Participants noted under reporting on Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, SDG 8 which seeks to *Promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all* had data gaps which needed urgent attention. Participants called for greater cooperation and coordination in the NSS to close the data gaps which were apparent in four SDGs clusters namely: economic ( goals 2,7 ,8,9 and 17);social (goals 1,3,4,5,6 and 10);environment (goals 11,12,13,14, and 15; and government covering goal number 16.

Participants completed an SDG template indicating data availability at ZIMSTAT and frequency including whether their sources of data were official or from other sources.

# DAY THREE:

## WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024



## Overview

Proceedings on the third day focused on bolstering coordination and networking among participants within Zimbabwe's national statistical systems. Stakeholders were united in their efforts of finding ways to strengthen the national data ecosystem, foster data-driven decision-making, and harness the potential of data for the prosperity of Zimbabwe. The revised framework for the Data for Development Initiative (DFDI) was presented and explained to participants. Participants resolved that sub-clusters for the DFDI would convene monthly either virtually or in person. Overall, it was pointed out that a lot still needed to be done to improve coordination and networking on issues relating to data in Zimbabwe.

A total of eleven presentations were made under the sub-theme 'Strengthening the National Data Ecosystem through partnerships and innovation'. The titles of the presentations were: Towards a Stronger National Data Ecosystem in Zimbabwe: "Leveraging Partnerships and Innovation, Partnership and Coordination; Mapping and structure of DFDI,

*How can civil society organizations collaborate with government and private sector entities to strengthen the national data ecosystem in Zimbabwe; Investing in Data: Financing for Statistics in line with the Zimbabwe strategy for the Development of statistics; NSS coordination, fostering data collaboration; Data Sharing Agreements: What can be done to develop templates and guidelines for data sharing agreements between different stakeholders; Data Standards and Harmonization: What can be done to Establishing common data standards and harmonization practices to ensure interoperability; Data Dissemination and Communication: Strategies for effective data dissemination and communication to various stakeholders; Capacity Building and Training: Identifying training needs and developing capacity-building programmes for data producers and users; Partnerships and Collaborations: Fostering partnerships between government, private sector, civil society, and development partners to leverage resources and expertise and Sustainability and Funding: Discussing sustainable funding models and resource mobilization strategies for NSS coordination and data collaboration.*

## Discussions

Discussions on the third day were aimed at strengthening Zimbabwe's National Data Ecosystem through producers and users sharing their needs, challenges and coming up with innovative solutions.

### Worry over absent stakeholders

The absence of key stakeholders in the national statistical system, particularly the private sector and people with disabilities alongside some ministries, such as Finance and Economic Development, Information Communication Technology and Courier Services, and Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (Potraz), was noted with concern. To strengthen the data ecosystem's coordination and networking, participants deemed it essential to include these stakeholders. ZIMSTAT was tasked with ensuring the participation of the absent stakeholders by inviting them to the monthly DFDI cluster meetings and including them in the next data user-producer

symposium. It was proposed to use apex bodies such as Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries and the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce to second representatives to the clusters.

### Need to broaden scope of data collaboration

Effective coordination to promote data collaboration needed to go beyond organising data user and producer symposia. To achieve this, participants called on the NSS to include coordination of data-sharing agreements, standardised protocols, and capacity-building initiatives including holding periodic cluster meetings regularly. The establishment of the Data for Development and Innovation Technical Working Group (DFDI-TWG) was recognized as a significant step towards achieving data harmonization in the country. Additionally, a DFDI TWG WhatsApp group was created to provide a platform for members to share information, coordinate activities, and communicate effectively.

## Clusters to ensure adequate representation of sectors

To ensure that the working group was effective, participants suggested that the group be divided into five clusters namely: economic, environment, governance, innovation, and social. Each cluster would be co-chaired by a ZIMSTAT manager and a partner from another organisation. Each of the clusters would develop work plans and share with the main group. Each cluster was expected to hold monthly meetings with the main DFDI group while meeting quarterly with the main group. Further, each cluster would be responsible for ensuring adequate representation at all levels within their cluster.

## Sustainable statistical financing model required

The National Statistical Services was reported to be planning a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify, analyse, and engage key stakeholders across sectors and industries. The NSS was also tasked with coming up with a sustainable statistical financing model. Participants noted that the financing model had to be robust to support statistical services by ensuring stable funding for data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Participants underscored the need for a policy which mandated Government ministries, departments and agencies to budget 10 percent of their annual budgets for statistical financing. The proposed budget allocation would need to be buttressed by amendments to the Census and Statistics Act on sections dealing with statistical financing. Participants emphasised that draft amendments should be submitted to the Attorney General's office expeditiously.

## Continued financial support for ZIMSTAT

Reiterating the issue of sustainability and funding, participants highlighted the need for continued support from development partners. ZIMSTAT was urged to find innovative ways to raise income to enable it to take the lead in multi-stakeholder data support projects.

Organisations requiring statistics on particular topics were encouraged to approach ZIMSTAT. As an example, participants suggested that ZIMSTAT could partner with commerce and industry and conduct surveys for them for a price. The agency was advised to be visible in the private sector by aggressively marketing its products and services.

## Data warehouse for centralised data accessibility

Participants proposed the creation of a data warehouse in collaboration with ZIMSTAT alongside investment in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and components that can handle large volumes of data. The data warehouse would ensure that data from various sources was easily accessible from a central location.

Data producers raised additional issues such as continuous investment in ICT infrastructure and leadership development in order to fully enhance the quality of data available to stakeholders. Data systems are online and therefore, participants highlighted the need to take into account issues of cyber security. This would be achieved through investing in ICT infrastructure and maintenance; leadership; and management.

## Coordinated training of data producers

Development training of data producers before analysis training was also raised. Participants called for the establishment of a Data Development and Innovation Cluster to coordinate improvement of skills, use of technology and leveraging big data to

cover data gaps. Technical training was also highlighted with data producers noting that managing data bases was a huge task. Producers needed to avoid descriptive statistics by possessing in-depth analysis skills. At the same time, data producers were urged to avoid preparing reports that were too technical with participants emphasising that statistical reports should be understandable.

The National Association of Non Governmental Organisations (NANGO) was encouraged to include traditional leaders in their activities so that the village heads in particular, knew how to collect and record basic demographic information and not do it haphazardly as was the case currently.

## Training of data users to understand and use data necessary

Data users on the other hand, cited the need to be capacitated in data interpretation, presentation, and statistical terminology. Such training would help users understand the definitions and jargon or terminology used by statisticians. Users also indicated a need to be trained on where to get, how to handle and use data. The proposed training would also include helping users appreciate and understand how official statistics were produced. Data users reiterated the need for data to be affordable for them to access.

## Balance essential in working with anonymised data

Challenges handling anonymised data were highlighted with participants underscoring that data anonymisation should strike a balance between protecting the identity of subjects and retaining value of data. Fears were expressed that too much anonymisation could strip off a lot of valuable information.

## Research institutions urged to contributing towards data production

Research institutions were called upon to contribute towards data production and use by providing human capital. Laws and policies need to be revised so that they align with current data needs. For all this to be achieved, participants noted a need to draw up clear goals based on the data requirements of stakeholders such as ministries, government agencies and civil society. Stakeholders were called upon to be responsive and adapt to technological changes promptly in order for them to be able to produce and use data meaningfully.



# DAY FOUR: THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2024



The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency is a corporate body established under the Statistics Act. The Agency's operational oversight role of the Board. The Agency is the main source of official statistics.

### Vision Statement

An effective and efficient statistical service to the improvement of the lives of Zimbabweans.

### Mission Statement

To produce timely, accurate, and evidence-based policy and information products and services to support the development of Zimbabwe.

### Core Values

User focus

the data needs

users

WC

5





## Overview

The final session sought to identify opportunities for data-driven solutions to Zimbabwe’s development challenges as well as map the way forward. Participants delved into the significance of data in attaining sustainable development in Zimbabwe, with a specific emphasis on the convergence of data, policy, and practice. Participants discussed methodologies for data collection, analysis, and application, as well as the potential utilisation of data to expedite the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the exchange of experiences and expertise, the session identified prospective avenues for data-oriented resolutions to Zimbabwe’s developmental obstacles.

Presentations of the final day were around the sub-theme ‘The Role of Statistics in Economic Development in Zimbabwe’. Presentations included *Unlocking the Power of Demographic Data: Latest Findings from the 2022 Census & Vital Statistics Data*, *Harnessing Data to Ensure No One is Left Behind: Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Development*, *Leveraging technological Data for Sustainable Development*, and *Transforming Data into Decisive Action for Humanitarian Impact*.



## Discussions

### Academia to help in training data producers and users

Participants emphasised the importance of engaging academia to provide training of data producers and users, to enhance users’ skills in analysis, report writing, and other data handling skills. Such collaboration would empower stakeholders to improve their data management and utilisation capabilities, leading to informed decision-making that brings about development. By extending training to rural areas, universities could help bridge the data literacy and analysis skills gap, to ensure equal access to data-driven insights and opportunities for all. It was noted that having communities participate in data generation would help them to determine their priorities and how they

were prioritised under the ‘Leave No One behind principle’.

### Multi-pronged fundraising for data generation

Participants called for a collective approach to fundraising for data generation in Zimbabwe, after it was noted that data production was a costly process that required collaboration among all stakeholders. While ZIMSTAT was mandated to collect data, it was acknowledged the agency could not bridge the funding gap alone. Therefore, a multi-pronged fund raising approach was suggested to mobilise enough resources to support data production and utilisation in the country. PPPs should be adopted on statistical financing to reduce the burden on ZIMSTAT. There was agreement that statistics pay for themselves if they are used.



## Regular statistical reports to help track progress

It was suggested that there should be periodical statistical presentations to assist in measuring milestones after participants calculated the Progress Index using population data to see changes between 2012 and 2022 population census using five indicators. Participants expressed concern that a 2017 poverty analysis that pointed to a red zone in Binga and Kariba District showed no improvement with regards to progress made to address poverty.

This was noted on ZIMSIX – an online database of CSOs being produced by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in conjunction with the Centre for Human Analytics – to collate the NGOs working in Zimbabwe, do budgets and target their beneficiaries. The system shows the linkages of the NSDS, SDGs and Agenda 2063.







# SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATIONS

The symposium made recommendations that need follow up and implementation with DFDI and ZIMSTAT taking the lead.

- Recommendation 1:** Collaboration between DFDI and ZIMSTAT to improve data production and usage to augment decision making by stakeholders. ZIMSTAT and DFDI were tasked with spearheading data sharing among government ministries, departments, and agencies.
- Recommendation 2:** Preliminary work plans developed for the five DFDI clusters need further input on budget allocations, to be fully operational. The plans outlined cluster objectives and strategies. The DFDI clusters were charged with reviewing availability of SDG data. The reviews would be based on draft documents developed during the symposium. The clusters were expected to compile a consolidated comprehensive report highlighting strengths, gaps, and recommendations. The report was to be shared among stakeholders.
- Recommendation 3:** ZIMSTAT to share Data Quality Framework and Data Validation procedures among data producers and users. The frameworks outline best practices for data collection, processing, dissemination, and validation procedures to ensure data accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. The procedures would help ensure consistent standards across data producers to guarantee the production of reliable official data.
- Recommendation 4:** A centralised data repository, the Data Dissemination Platform, to be established jointly by DFDI and ZIMSTAT to enable data producers to share data with a broad range of stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, and the general public, to facilitate data-driven decision-making and transparency.
- Recommendation 5:** ZIMSTAT and DFDI to jointly facilitate access to information platforms, and organise capacity-building workshops to enhance the skills of data producers and users in data management, analysis, and visualisation. The proposed regular training sessions would ensure that data producers and users have the necessary expertise to effectively collect, analyse, and utilise data for informed decision-making.
- Recommendation 6:** The NSS to come up with a single consolidated work plan that included updates from cluster co-chairs. The NSS clusters to select co-chairs.
- Recommendation 7:** An end of year review and evaluation of National Strategy for the Development of Statistics III be conducted.
- Recommendation 8:** Incorporation of the risk management framework into the ZIMSTAT operations and procedures.
- Recommendation 9:** The DFDI should continue to conduct monthly and quarterly meetings. Additionally, SDGs mapping should continue.
- Recommendation 10:** The private sector and key ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development should be represented at such meetings alongside associations of people with disabilities.
- Recommendation 11:** Review and amendment of the Census and Statistics.
- Recommendation 12:** Awareness campaigns be conducted during data collection. The campaigns should be aired on community radio stations in local languages.

# SYMPOSIUM OUTPUTS

The first output was a restructured DFDI group. The redesigned structure was expected to enhance effectiveness. The new DFDI group comprises five clusters: economic, social, environment, governance, and innovation. Each cluster will be co-chaired by a ZIMSTAT manager and an agreed partner.

Secondly, the DFDI clusters developed and validated JWPs, although the plans still required additional input, particularly budgets. The joint UN inputs were incorporated into the plans which will be consolidated into the overall DFDI JWPs.

Lastly, symposium participants reviewed available data on SDGs. The consolidated SDGs data availability template was to be shared later. The review was instrumental in identifying data gaps and opportunities for collaboration among data producers. Sources of such data were identified as ZIMSTAT, administrative records, and other additional sources.



# ANNEXURE

Please scan the QR codes provided to access digital copies of annexure documents



Concept note [Link](#)

Programme [Link](#)

List of Participants

Remarks: [Link to Symposium Remarks](#)

- i. ZIMSTAT Acting Director-General **Mr Aluwisio Mukavhi**
- ii. ZIMSTAT Board Chairman **Mr John Mafarikwa**
- iii. Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Manicaland Hon. Advocate **Misheck Mugadza**
- iv. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, His Excellency **Edward Kallon** represented by **Mrs Miranda Tabifor**, UNFPA Country Representative and DFDI co-chair,
- v. UN Women Country Representative, **Ms Fatou Lo**

## Presentations

### Day 1 Day 1 Presentations links

1. Experiences in Data Production by government ministries, departments and agencies: Opportunities, Challenges and Best Practices - Ministry of Health and Child Care
2. Experiences in Data Production - Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development
3. Experiences in Data Production - Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage
4. Overview of the National Statistical System - ZIMSTAT
5. The Role of the Health Sector in Strengthening CRVs - WHO
6. Experiences in Data Production: Opportunities, Challenges and Best Practices - Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

### Day 2 Day 2 Presentation links

1. Data User Perspectives: Reflections, Insights and Best Practice - UNFPA
2. Unlocking the Power of Data: Bridging the Gap between Data Producers and Users for Information Decision Making - Kawazva J.
3. How Technology is transforming the data and statistics, TBA ICT/Cartography - GIS, ZIMSTAT

### Day 3 Day 3 Presentation links

1. Environment: SDGS Data Availability Mapping
2. Unlocking the Power of Data: Why Investing in Data Matters

### Day 4 Day 4 Presentation links

1. Transforming data into decisive action for humanitarian impact
2. From Principle to Action Gendered Statistics UN Women
3. Role of Statistics in National Development - University of Zimbabwe
4. Leaving No-one Behind - UNDP
5. Population Projections 2022-2-42 ZIMSTAT
6. Unlocking the Power of Demographic Data - ZIMSTAT



# DATA USER-PRODUCER SYMPOSIUM REPORT

## Sharing Experiences and Best Practices

*Using the Power of Data to Drive Transformative  
Development in Zimbabwe*



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ZIMBABWE**

