Committee: UNICEF - JUNIOR COMMITTEE (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

Country: Zimbabwe

Agenda Item(s): Fighting against social exclusion, child poverty and providing education during emergencies.

Zimbabwe is a country which is located in the continent of Africa. It borders Zambia to the north-west, Mozambique to the north-east, South Africa and Botswana to the south. It is also between the Lompopo and Zambezi rivers. Around 15 million people live in Zimbabwe. The president of Zimbabwe currently is Emmerson Mnangagwa. Despite it being in the not so developed continent, Africa, Zimbabwe’s economy is not the worst. It had the second best informal economy; which is a type of economy that is not monitired by taxes or the government. However, now with Covid-19, new wars popping out of no where and hyperinflations starting to appear, Zimbabwe has been falling in a state of extreme poverty spreaded all around the country.

In Zimbabwe in 2008, 65% of health care services were provided by the public sector. The severe social and economic challenges since that time have resulted in an unprecedented deterioration of health care infrastructure, loss of experienced health sector personnel, and a drastic decline in the quality of health services available for the population

Zimbabwe has always been a country which depended on mining and informal economy. Zimbabwe is very rich in terms of platinium and gold, having the second highest deposit of platinium and having over 4,000 gold deposits. However, Zimbabwe can’t use this benefit and is very weak in finding people suitable for the job.  Because of this, the gold output has dropped by %30 percent in the first quarter of 2021. Furthermore, the Zimbabwean government’s decision to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Second Congo War drained its bank reserves, alienated its allies and caused the U.S. and the EU to impose sanctions. Subsequently, Zimbabwe’s economy collapsed. As a result, the government began printing more money, leading to widespread hyperinflation of the Zimbabwean dollar. With all of these, poverty now affects %76 percent of children currently living in Zimbabwe. Roughly 74% of the population lives on less than 5 dollars a say  and the average wage per month is 253 dollars. So, with everything in hand, Zimbabwe is facing extreme poverty and needs instant help.

However, as of right now the situation in Zimbabwe is improving. In 2021, Zimbabwe’s unemployment rates will likely continue to decrease. The rebound is primarily due to increased vaccination efforts, with China providing over two million of COVID-19 vaccines to the country. In addition, multiple non-governmental orgisations are fighting poverty in Zimbabwe. For example, Talia’s Women’s Network thinks to end period poverty by seeking to provide girls’ access information to combat early childhood marriage, gender-based violence and unwanted pregnancies so that women can grow up and help the economy. Another organization, Action Change, supplies feed 400 primary students in Zimbabwe. It also works to break the cycle of poverty by providing resources for education. Zimbabwe spends 93% of the estimated $905 million it gets toward education on employment costs, leaving only about %7 percent of the budget for classroom resources. Action Change provides schools with resources such as textbooks and other essential needs.

Zimbabwe has an unique climate, it has 7 months in which rain is very rare and 5 months that are mostly rainy. Because of the dryness that lasts about 7 months, Zimbabwe has suffered with a lot droughts. But, with droughts, in the wet months floods may happen too. Earthquakes aren’t much of a problem in Zimbabwe however, and most of the country is rated in the 4th degree in terms of earthquakes. Out of approximately 3,400 earthquakes recorded in a 32 year period, only 30 exceeded a magnitude of 5 on the Richter scale with the largest earthquake occurring beneath Lake Kariba in 1963, measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale. So mostly, in Zimbabwe, droughts and floods are important. Also, a hurricane known as Cyclone Idai has damaged Mozambique, Zimbabwe and many more countries. In 2019, a total of 220,000 houses was destroyed and 160,000 people became displaced. Also 600 people have sadly passed away.

In Zimbabwe, most floods which happen are very effective to the population because of the infastructure of houses. For instance, there are many communities living in the lower Zambezi valley such as in the Muzarabani and Guruve. The lower Zambezi is highly vulnerable to flooding and, in fact, the word Muzarabani means “flood plain” in the Shona language. Droughts also lead to things like farming becoming completely useless and water sources drying up. In Zimbabwe, years of successive drought has also left it vulnerable to food insecurity.

However, Zimbabwe has a special thing in store for things like this. During an emergency, the system being used would activate all available national resources, such as setting up a National Civil Protection Fund. If the resources of the system are overwhelmed, a presidential declaration of national disaster would be made and regional and international resources would be seeked immediately. Gwimbi offers some recommendations to make Zimbabwean communities more resilient to flooding. First, the provision of early warning information is talked and it is crucial to reduce flood damage. Secondly, communities develop a disaster plan that would serve as a guide to flood risk reduction. Third, conservation strategies, such as afforestation programs, would be made to help to reduce flood risk. Also, UNICEF has helped Zimbabwe through these events. During 2017a total of 481,880 people were reached with safe water to recover from the damages from the droughts. A total of 973 facility based health workers were trained with the management of nutritions and 4,289 village health workers were trained to conduct active case finding in the 20 targeted districts. A total of 240,674 children were reached and given malnutrition during the year.

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