

# THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY - ZIMBABWE

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: THE KEY TO DEVELOPMENT PRODUCED BY THE  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION 30 SEPTEMBER 2000

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### **FOREWORD:**

The National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe prepared in consultation with the young people and stakeholders highlights the priorities and policies to be adopted by government to ensure empowerment of our youth.

The formulation of the National Youth Policy reflects the commitment by Government to meeting the needs and aspirations of young people. A number of youth development strategies and programmes were implemented in the past and at present by the many concerned groups from various sectors. Youth development has always been a major agenda by Government since independence in 1980.

The government's vision acknowledges empowerment of young women and men so that they can realise their full potential as individuals, as members of communities, political and social action groups, and youth organisations and as key to development of Zimbabwe. The mission of the Youth Policy and its associated plan of action is to work towards the realisation of this vision.

Young people who are defined by the policy as aged between 10- 30 years constitute the greatest resource for Zimbabwe's future development. It is imperative that young people be empowered with the means to take charge of their lives and transform in a positive way.

It is my hope that with the implementation of this policy a desired environment will be created for the youth to effectively participate in the development of Zimbabwe.

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## **ACRONYMS**

AIDS Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome  
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
CPA Country Population Assessment  
CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CSO Central Statistical Office  
DHS Demographic and Health Survey  
STD Sexually transmitted disease  
STI Sexually transmitted infection  
HIV Human Immuno-deficiency Virus  
ICDS Inter-censal Demographic Survey  
IEC Information, Education and Communication  
MYDGEC Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation  
MOHCW Ministry of Health and Child Welfare  
NACP National AIDS Coordination Programme  
NGO Non Governmental Organization  
NYTC National Youth Technical Committee  
UN United Nations  
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund  
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund  
ZIMPREST Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation  
ZNFPC Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The National Youth Policy described in this document is designed to provide a comprehensive and multi-sectoral framework for addressing youth issues that are currently considered not commensurate with achieving sustainable socio-economic development. The Policy is consistent with the Constitution of Zimbabwe and major international conventions and agreements. It is based on a set of eleven guiding principles, which provide the ethical context for a human rights approach to dealing with youth concerns. It represents a declaration of the priority and directions that the country intends giving to the development of its young women and men. It therefore provides broad guidelines from which action programmes and services could be developed to facilitate meaningful involvement of youth in national development efforts that will respond to their various needs and problems.

The overall policy statement tries to capture the multi-sectoral focus of the Policy. It states that the National Youth Policy seeks to empower the youth by creating an enabling environment and marshalling the resources necessary for undertaking programmes to fully develop youth's mental,

moral, social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and physical potential in order to improve their quality of life.

The National Youth Policy seeks to achieve the following goals:

- (i) To contribute towards the participatory eradication of poverty and all forms of social and economic exclusion of the youth since poverty is one of the most formidable enemies of choice;
- (ii) To develop a coordinated response and participation by all stakeholders including government, non-government and private organizations for the development of the young women and men of the country;
- (iii) To promote healthy lifestyles and personal well being with particular emphasis on prevention of HIV/AIDS and promotion of reproductive health and care;
- (iv) To define and prioritize areas of specific action for youth progress in accordance with the overall policies of the Government and constitutional requirements of Zimbabwe.

Underpinning these goals is the need for achieving the following policy objectives:

- (i) Systematically integrate youth issues into all policies, plans, programmes and strategies at all levels and within all sectors and institutions of government, NGOs and the private sector;
- (ii) Develop and implement programmes and interventions on all national youth concerns;
- (iii) Make available reliable and up-to-date information on the youth development situation in the country in order to inform policy making and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels and in all sectors;
- (iv) Promote youth participation in development activities;
- (v) Provide opportunities for youth employment and initiatives;
- (vi) Promote the value and development of vocational and skills training for the youth;
- (vii) Reduce the incidence of teenage and unplanned pregnancies;
- (viii) Reduce the spread of STDs, HIV/AIDS among the youth and their impact on the individual and society; reduce alcohol and substance abuse among the youth;
- (ix) Improve access for youth with disabilities to facilities and services, and promote prevention of disabilities;
- (x) Promote gender equality and equity among the youth, in particular, in education and training, socio-cultural, political, economic and legal spheres;
- (xi) Promote environmental education and active participation in environmental conservation among the youth;
- (xii) Ensure that adequate resources are directed towards youth development programmes;
- (xiii) Promote research and disseminate information on youth.

An analysis of the youth situation in Zimbabwe reveals that there are a number of major youth issues (social, economic, cultural) that need to be dealt with as part of the numerous development programmes and strategies

in the country. Some of these issues constitute serious obstacles to youth development and to improving the quality of life of the population. A number of youth concerns/issues have been identified as a result of analysing the socio-economic situation in the country and consulting a wide range of stakeholders through out the country. These concerns include the following:

- .. High rate of youth unemployment
- .. Inadequacy of the educational system for current job markets in both the formal and informal sectors
- .. Deteriorating health conditions as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and teenage pregnancy-related problems coupled with inadequate youth-friendly health services
- .. Youth exploitation including sexual abuse, child labour, domestic abuse
- .. Alcohol and substance abuse
- .. Lack of access to resources
- .. Inadequate focus on behaviour change and life skills methodologies;
- .. Unsupportive social environment for adolescent/youth sexual and reproductive health programming;
- .. Low coverage of youth in sexual and reproductive health programmes;
- .. Inadequate definition of adolescent-friendly services;
- .. Inadequate training and educational materials at all levels;
- .. Youth sexual and reproductive health needs overshadowed by pressing economic and recreational needs;
- .. Inadequate implementation, coordination and monitoring of youth sexual and reproductive health programmes;
- .. Inadequate youth participation;
- .. Lack of definition of youth problems and fragmented response to youth concerns;
- .. Lack of co-ordinated strategic plan to tackle youth issues; different organizations having different perspectives on youth development/programmes; duplication of youth activities;
- .. Inability to implement global plans of action for youth;
- .. Lack of pertinent information/data bank on youth programmes; no directory on youth organizations/associations for making appropriate decisions on youth programmes.

A number of strategies are outlined, which comply with the multi-sectoral nature of the Youth Policy and relate to a range of programmes that should be implemented by a variety of institutions in order to achieve the stated policy objectives. The strategies are grouped under seven broad areas, namely:

- (i) Education and Vocational Skills Training
- (ii) Youth Employment and Access to Resources
- (iii) Youth Empowerment and Participation
- (iv) Health, Population and Environment
- (v) Gender Equality and Equity
- (vi) Culture, Sports and Recreation
- (vii) Data and Research
- (viii) National Youth Service

The implementation of this policy depends on a sound institutional framework and active political, administrative and technical support for the translation of goals, objectives and strategies outlined in the Policy into actual programmes at all levels of society. A concerted and coordinated effort is required by government, non-government, and private institutions, churches, youth groups and community organizations to address youth issues in a comprehensive way. This requires an identification and elaboration of the mechanisms for collaboration and coordination. Immediately after the approval of the Policy, a comprehensive Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy will be prepared with the involvement of key stakeholders. The Action Plan will provide details on implementation and coordination mechanisms. Deliberate efforts will be made to utilize existing structures of government and civil society to implement the policy in order to avoid creating additional institutional frameworks, unless they are absolutely necessary. Some reorientation of functions and the establishment and/or strengthening of operational linkages will, however, be necessary.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 RATIONALE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY**

The Republic of Zimbabwe has developed various policies that have impacts on the youth of the country. However, it did not have an explicit youth policy until now. An analysis of the youth situation in Zimbabwe reveals that there are a number of major youth issues (social, economic, cultural) that need to be dealt with as part of the numerous development programmes and strategies in the country. Some of these issues constitute serious obstacles to youth development and to improving the quality of life of the population. They therefore need to be resolved within the framework of an explicit, comprehensive and multi-sectoral youth policy.

No nation can move forward when its young people are trapped in cycles of poverty, or when they have inadequate health care, and limited education, or when they are constrained by social and cultural values that hinder their progress. There is a clear recognition that youths are a vulnerable group that need protection by government and other supporting agencies and their own communities. It has also been established that youths are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, policy makers, programme developers and implementors need to recognize that interventions should vary in type and in the way they are delivered to different youth sub-groups.

Youths are the potential strength of a nation; they constitute the pillar upon which a nation is built. They are full of energy, enthusiasm and dynamism.

Their potentials have to be channeled to enable them to play a constructive role in the socio-economic development of the country.

A national youth policy is of vital importance to empower youth to contribute to the shaping and building of the nation. It represents a declaration of the priority and directions that a country intends giving to the development of its young women and men. It is a statement outlining the vision, the values and principles that guide us, the issues that challenge us, and the initiatives, programmes and delivery mechanisms being planned and implemented to improve the socio-economic well-being of our youth.

This policy therefore provides broad guidelines from which action programmes and services could be developed to facilitate meaningful involvement of youth in national development efforts that will respond to their various needs and problems.

It is acknowledged that the development of young people in Zimbabwe requires the involvement of different groups and sectors. The National Youth Policy, therefore provides a means whereby these different sectors (Government, Non-Government, Community, and Private) as well as young people themselves, can work together to achieve common goals.

## **1.2 Definition of Youth**

The concept of 'Youth' could have many connotations to different people and organizations. Definitions range from those that are purely of a legal nature to those that are of a functional one. In all countries, the terms "adolescent", "teenager," "youth" all refer to young people undergoing physical mental and cultural transition from childhood to adulthood. The World Health Organization defines adolescents as people age 10 to 19 and young people as age 10-24. In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Health, the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) and the Central Statistical Office (CSO) consider those in the age group 10-24 as youth. Similarly, the National Population Policy used the age group 10-24 to define the youth population. However, in the national and district consultations on youth policy formulation, there has not been any consensus on this definition.

It is hereby suggested that in the Zimbabwe National Youth Policy, the definition of youth will refer to 10-30 year olds irrespective of their gender, race, colour, religion, political affiliation, marital status, physical or mental disability.

This definition is arrived at as a result of the following justifications. Some of the problems associated with adolescent health and child labour start manifesting themselves in the age group 10-14. At 24 years, most post-

secondary school students graduate from colleges and universities and from other training institutions and start looking for employment. It is between 24-30 that they assume greater responsibilities with minimal work experience to enable them to compete in the labour market. After 30 years most of them are expected to have established themselves. However, different non-governmental youth organisations in Zimbabwe have different definitions depending mainly on the nature of programmes they promote. It should therefore be recognised that for various reasons it is difficult to arrive at a universally acceptable definition of youth.

It is necessary to note here that the lumping together of young people from 10 to 30 years of age risks masking the particular needs of sub groups within that range. The reproductive health needs of 10-14 year olds differ from those of 15-19 year olds. The needs of the latter group differ dramatically from those of 25-30 year olds, particularly for women. For the younger groups mentioned the key need is the right to (and access to) reproductive health information and services. For the older women this right is already well accepted. On the other hand, to speak of access to property and employment seems to make less sense for the younger age groups than for someone who has reached legal age of majority (age 18). Hence, specific strategies and programme interventions are required to deal with the needs of different sub-groups.

### **1.3 Principles, Rights and Responsibilities Underlying the National Youth Policy**

1. The Youth Policy should be consistent with the Constitution of Zimbabwe and major international conventions and agreements which Zimbabwe has subscribed to, in particular the rights and freedoms set forth in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. The Youth Policy should be an integral part of the overall development policies and programmes of the nation and hence should not be seen in isolation. In this regard, the Youth Policy acknowledges the importance of other sectoral policies and programmes and their linkages to the Youth Policy.
3. Government should give the overall well being of children and youth the highest priority.
4. Everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The youth have the right to be informed about all matters relating to their daily lives including the right to reproductive health information and services.
5. Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualification is necessary if more young people are to become agents of change.
6. Advancing gender equality and equity is a fundamental prerequisite for youth development and hence constitutes the cornerstone for the Youth Policy.



7. The Policy should promote national unity and support for the family unit.
8. The Policy recognizes the impact of religious and cultural beliefs and practices on youth issues and the need to maintain balance between them and individual rights.
9. The Policy recognizes a number of fundamental rights which the youth of Zimbabwe have/should have including freedom of expression and association; good parental care; protection from all forms of exploitation, discrimination and abuse; access to all benefits of citizenship such as education, training, employment (beyond the legal age of majority), health care, recreation; individual and collective ownership of property for those who have reached the legal age of majority.
10. The Policy also recognizes important responsibilities which the youth should understand and fulfill including: to participate in the social, cultural and economic development of the country; to develop, appreciate and respect national cultural norms and values; to take an active involvement in decision making at all levels affecting their lives; to promote and defend democracy and the rule of law; and to uphold as a priority the protection of the environment.
11. The Policy will be reviewed regularly so that it remains consistent with and relevant to the changing circumstances in youth work and the socio-economic realities of the country.

## **2. THE YOUTH SITUATION/PROFILE AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **2.1 The Demographic Situation**

Like all countries in the region, Zimbabwe is a very youthful nation in terms of its demography. Approximately 45% of the population is below the age of fifteen years which represents a tremendous potential for future growth. According to the 1992 Population Census, the youth population (age 10-30) constitute about 43% of the total population of 10,412,548. Female youths outnumber male ones. This is true of nearly all districts in the country. Male dominance is evident in districts with large scale commercial farms, as well as in a few urban areas such as Victoria Falls, Kariba and Chirundu which have employment opportunities that favour males.

According to results from the 1997 Inter-censal Demographic Survey (ICDS), the annual rate of population growth is estimated at about 2.5%. The growth rate will still decline in the future due to a mix of increased contraceptive use, changing attitudes towards family sizes, urbanization, female education and the increased mortality due to HIV/AIDS. There is evidence that fertility has declined in Zimbabwe during the last decade. The total fertility rate has declined from 5.5 children per woman in 1988 to 4.3 children per woman in 1994, a 22 percent decline. However, among women aged 15-19 age specific fertility rate declined only slightly. Women in Zimbabwe continue to start

child bearing at a relatively young age. Close to 40% of adolescents are already mothers by the time they are 19 years.

According to the 1992 Census, the female youth constitute more than 45% of the married female population and more than 94% of the never married female population while the male youth constitute about 24% of the married male population and about 94% of the never married male population. The age of sexual consent for girls is 16, but there is no age of consent for boys. The minimum age of marriage under the Marriage Act is 16 for girls and 18 for boys.

In the 1990s, infant, child, maternal and adult mortality rates have all increased, and life expectancy at birth has fallen for both males and females. AIDS has clearly been the leading determinant of these changes. There is also evidence that other poverty related factors may have contributed to worsening mortality indices, including increases in female drop outs from education, problems related to access to appropriate health care (in relation to maternal mortality) etc.

The implications of the demographic profile are many. First, such a youthful population (with a potential to grow further) presents problems in terms of the provision of social services such as education and health as well as employment. Neglect of the youth can lead to problems, both immediately and in the years ahead. However, our youthful population also presents opportunities for progress: a little help can go a long way in channeling their energy toward positive and productive paths. Thus, one of the most important commitments a country can make for future economic, social and political progress and stability is to address the health and development needs of its youth.

## 2.2 The Socio-Economic Situation

The slow growth in the economy, rising unemployment, difficulties associated with the protection of basic social services in the face of a changing economic environment and the devastating AIDS epidemic pose great development challenges for all Zimbabweans. However, the magnitude and implications of these problems are more severe for youth. As will be described below, the youth population lacks various basic opportunities for their development.

### 2.2.1 Education and Vocational Skills Training

Zimbabwe has achieved excellent progress in education since independence. Government has maintained the position that education is a basic human right and it remains committed to the provision of a relevant, quality education to everyone. Primary education is almost universal. The adult

literacy rate increased from 62% in 1982 to 80% in 1992 and to 82% in 1997. Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that out of a total secondary school enrolment of 750,723 pupils in 1996, 46% were females. There are marked differentials at secondary level with more girls than boys dropping out of school. However, the introduction of fee charges and increased costs of schooling in the 1990s has created significant barriers to participation among children from poorer families, particularly for girls. Under such circumstances, parents tend to favour boys over girls in sending children to school. Some parents also tend to favour boys over girls as they perceive that boys are more intelligent than girls. Girls are also disadvantaged as they are expelled from schools when they fall pregnant and not allowed to go back to the same school, even after delivery.

The focus of education has been on providing academic training suitable for formal employment to the widest possible population, rather than vocational training for risk-taking and self-reliant activity. The significant growth in graduates coupled with low economic growth has increased competition in the job market to the point where academic qualifications no longer guarantee any employment.

At the tertiary level, public and private universities, teacher training colleges, and agricultural colleges and institutes have produced large numbers of highly trained individuals qualified in a wide variety of areas needed to fuel economic growth. However, the economy has not been able to absorb graduates as they come on stream.

There is still a debate on whether the secondary school curriculum should provide a broad academic experience or a more vocational experience tailored to the income-generating skills required in the domestic economy. From the national and district consultations on youth policy, it is clear that there is a need for the re-orientation of the education and training systems from its current academic thrust towards the acquisition of practical vocational skills. Curricula should be redefined so as to meet the specific needs of the informal and small-scale sectors as well as identifying and developing talents. Skill requirements of the small-scale enterprises and informal sectors should be addressed within the formal education and training systems. Moreover, life-saving reproductive health information in schools is desperately needed.

### 2.2.2 Employment

Youth unemployment is one of the most formidable problems facing the country. Unemployment in Zimbabwe is estimated at between 35% and 50%. The pattern of unemployment by age shows that the youth have the highest unemployment rates. Of concern also, is the number of children aged 10-14 who should be in school but instead, are currently employed. According to the 1997 ICDS, this figure was 74,722 and 89% of these were employed in the agricultural sector. In Zimbabwe, the legal minimum age for

employment is 15 and employed children cannot work for more than 6 hours a day. Under the Legal Age of Majority Act (1982), men and women reach majority at 18. This Act brought a major change in the status of women, who before its enactment were perpetual minors without the capacity to enter into legal relations in their own right. Today, they can enter into marriage, business and other contracts and can sue, or be sued, in their own right.

Excluding the communal/rural areas, the incidence of unemployment is higher among female youths than their male counterparts. However, generally the majority of the unemployed school leavers have attained secondary education with 'O' or 'A' level qualifications. The higher qualifications embodied in unemployed youths are not surprising, given the massive expansion of the education system following independence in 1980 and the current economic environment.

The problem of the unemployed school leavers has reached unprecedented levels. It is therefore questionable whether the academic focus of the education system is relevant for the needs of the current economy. These school leavers have no experience, and no adequate practical skills. Yet their academic qualification has imbued them with high aspirations for white-collar jobs.

What youth need to improve their chances of (self) employment are practical skills and opportunities for work experience in the labour market. Suggestions have been made in various fora about the need for exploring additional sources of employment, especially in the non-formal sector and through the promotion of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). Several initiatives undertaken to deal with the problem of youth unemployment suffer from lack of coordination at the national level, inadequate funding and a business environment that is not enabling, with high inflation and high interest rates.

### 2.2.3 The Health Situation

#### 2.2.3.1. The Youth and HIV/AIDS

Zimbabwe is in the midst of a severe and worsening epidemic. The magnitude and scope of HIV/AIDS is alarming. According to the National AIDS Co-ordination Programme (NACP), Zimbabwe has one of the highest prevalences of HIV infection. Reportedly, there are more than two thousand infections per week.

Estimates from sentinel surveillance data indicate that the HIV infection rate rose steadily from 9.2% in 1990 to 19.4% in 1995, at an average annual increase of 2% (MOHCW :1997). The magnitude of the epidemic could even be much greater since reported cases seriously under-represent the actual

incidence of HIV/AIDS because of under-diagnosis and under-reporting. Of the reported cases, close to 60% are young adults between 20 and 39 years. More females are infected at a younger age than males and in the 15-19 age group, female cases are six times that of males. The peak age for being infected with HIV is believed to be 20-29 for females and 30-39 for males (NACP : 1997). Women in general and young women in particular are more susceptible to HIV/AIDS since they often lack the power to avoid sexual coercion or to negotiate safe sex with their partners. The subordinate position of women right from childhood deny them the opportunity of putting into practice the knowledge they may have in protecting themselves from HIV/AIDS. Younger women also have sexual relationship with older men for material and financial support and may not have the power to negotiate safe sex with them. A survey by Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) in 1997 found that 28% of the respondents 10-24 years had sex with the average at first sex being 16.6 for boys and 17.6 for girls. Adolescent girls are at a particular risk because of their biological vulnerability. According to the 1994 DHS, knowledge of HIV/AIDS among Zimbabwean adolescents is wide spread. However, the large majority of adolescents and young adults do not consider themselves at risk of contracting the HIV virus. Fifty-one percent of young women in urban areas and 40 per cent of women in rural areas know someone who has AIDS or died of AIDS. The results for young men are similar. Despite this knowledge, change in behaviour is not noticeable.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on society in general and on young people in particular is as widespread and often as destructive as the virus itself. The changing circumstances of young people and their relationships among themselves have a wide range of implications for their health, especially as regards HIV/AIDS. Health risks arise from the changing behavioural orientation of young people as they find themselves without a point of reference amidst social circumstances that are quite different from those that their parents experienced. According to UNAIDS estimates, there were 450,000 children under the age of 15 who have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS by the end of 1997. The death of one parent can be more devastating than the loss of both, as the remaining parent, rather than helping survivors to cope with their trauma, makes increasing demands on them as the illness advances.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has also many other implications on the demographic profile including a reduction in the population growth rate, increase in infant and child mortality rates, and decline in expectation of life at birth. The loss of productive age groups, who previously generated resources for caring and their consumption of resources, has economic effects. The loss of parenting and socialisation has social effects that can carry into the next generation. AIDS is altering the structure of the population and households, increasing dependency. Many of those at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS are employed or intend to be employed thus the nation risks losing high numbers of its active workforce.

At the personal level, the most direct impact of AIDS is emotional trauma. Most individuals are unwilling to share the diagnosis. They fear community disapproval and as a result they become isolated which induces depression and difficulties in dealing with family issues. The social services system is not yet equipped to deal effectively with this.

The incidences of rape are on the increase and most children that are raped are victims of relatives or some persons known to them. The actual figures are still unknown as most cases are not reported but it would not be difficult to anticipate the impact of rape in transmitting HIV/AIDS among the youth. In Zimbabwe, statutory rape is defined as having sexual intercourse with girls below the age of sixteen (16) years whether it is by consent or not. It would be desirable to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act to provide the same protection for boys. The punishment has often varied depending on the degree of the offense. However, in recent years, there has been a general outcry that the punishments were too lenient given the HIV/AIDS situation and the increasing number of young girls being infected with HIV/AIDS.

Whilst AIDS is not sparing individuals on the basis of their economic class position, its impacts on the poor young people are more severe. HIV/AIDS exacerbates existing socio-economic inequalities by placing more demands for treatment, food, etc. on individuals who do not have much in terms of financial resources.

#### 2.2.3.2. Reproductive Health Status of Adolescents and Youth

The reproductive health status of youth and adolescents has been declining throughout the 1990s. Young women (15-19) give birth to about 57,000 infants per year. The gap in the age between sexual onset and marriage has increased. Adolescent fertility is linked with increased risk of maternal mortality or abortion. The number of illegal abortions is high especially in the 20-24 age group and appears to be increasing as well among the 15-19 year olds.

Another major concern is the high prevalence rate of STDs among youth. In 1997, 14% of 15-19 and 19% of 20-24 year olds were reported to have STDs. Despite such prevalence of STDs, youth have little access to health services.

The sharp rise in sexual experience after the age of 15, as found out by Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) survey, coupled with the multiple sexual partners, and unprotected sexual intercourse practiced by adolescents require intensification of information, education, counselling and other reproductive health/ family planning services for this vulnerable group.

A 1999 UNICEF study "Report on Health and Development Needs among Out-of-School Youth in Zimbabwe" (draft) investigated the health and development needs of both male and female out-of-school youths between the ages of 14-24 years in seven provinces of Zimbabwe. Its findings, among others, include: (i) Sexual behaviour change among out-of-school youths was perceived as lagging behind even though HIV/AIDS/STI awareness was considered very high; (ii) The available health facilities were perceived as not being "youth friendly." This factor was associated with negative health seeking behaviour among out-of-school youths, e.g., preference to visit a traditional healer first as opposed to a nurse at a local clinic; not seeking medical help at all; (iii) Sources of health information including HIV/AIDS were considered inadequate irrespective of the setting or gender. While the radio was considered the main source, there were problems with programming content, which sometimes gave conflicting messages, and with availability of radios. Parent-child communication was not adequate, as most parents felt uncomfortable to discuss sexuality and other growth and development issues with their children. Clearly, the risky sexual behaviour of youth in general and high fertility of young women in particular are among the priority concerns.

Many of the factors that underlie unhealthy development in youths stem from the social environment which include poverty and unemployment, gender discrimination and the impact of social change on family and communities. Lack of qualified and committed personnel at health centres on youth needs and requirements is also a major problem facing the youth. Programme efforts need to take into account that youths are not alike and that interventions and the way they are delivered will vary according to differing needs and circumstances.

Recent socio-economic developments have influenced the cultural values that make pre-marital sexual activities more appealing and acceptable to adolescents and youth. The socio-cultural and health consequences of unprotected sexual behaviour are more severe for girls than for boys and are mainly associated with unwanted pregnancy, early child bearing, STD/HIV/AIDS and the related social repercussions for young women such as forced termination of education and lower economic opportunities. Public health and social implications will include the high costs involved in managing the disease(s).

Despite the gloomy picture depicted above, there is a strong movement towards adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health programming in Zimbabwe. An increasing number of governmental and parastatal agencies, youth-serving NGOs, religious organizations, universities, international agencies and donors are getting involved in providing information and services to the youth.

#### 2.2.3.3. Hygiene, Sanitation and Nutrition

The recent economic problem in the country has threatened a reversal of the noteworthy achievements of the immunization campaigns of the last two decades. Health infrastructure in the country is deteriorating. Certain diseases which were almost wiped out such as measles and tuberculosis have resurfaced with increasing intensity. A lot of the young people have no/limited access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. This has been compounded by overcrowding in mostly high density areas and rural growth points. A large number of young people are also afflicted by malnutrition.

#### 2.2.3.4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Drug addiction, which used to be seen generally as a problem of the developed world, has progressively spread throughout the African continent. In Zimbabwe, alcohol and drug abuse is threatening all segments of the society, especially the young people. The kind of drugs used by youth and the magnitude of the problem vary across the country. However, studies indicate that many health hazards accompany the use of drugs particularly among the youth. Persistent drug use blocks development, lowers immunity and resistance to infection. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that the use of one drug is more likely to lead to multiple drug use. The social and economic consequences of drug abuse are equally destructive. They cause disruption and disharmony within the family and every family member suffers. At school, drug use undermines the academic ability and performance level. It also brings into the school environment, the illegal activities connected to drug use including the selling of drugs to others. Widespread use of drugs in the workplace generates a number of serious problems such as decreased productivity, poor performance, absenteeism and job related accidents in addition to the criminal aspects of on-the-job drug use.

#### 2.2.4 Youth and Gender

The term gender is not used to describe the biological sexual characteristics by which we identify females and males but to encompass the socially defined sex roles, attitudes and values which communities and societies ascribe as appropriate for one sex or the other. Many indicators of development show gender disparities reflecting the generally lower status of women compared with men. Enrolment rates at primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels are higher for males than for females. Adult literacy rates are also higher for males than for females. A high dropout rate is recorded for young women due to teenage pregnancies and increased school fees. The few young women at the tertiary level of education are mainly enrolled in traditionally female sectors such as teaching and nursing.

Women in general and young women in particular have lower labour force participation rates than males and are employed largely in low-wage jobs.



Women have found it increasingly difficult to access economic resources especially financial resources and the restructuring of the economy has driven women into insecure employment, unemployment, dangerous working situations and increased feminization of poverty. The customary law of inheritance disadvantages the girl child and women since they cannot inherit from their fathers except in situations where there is no surviving son. Women are under-represented in the decision-making structures of both government and the private sector. The incidence of violence against women is high. Although the Constitution guarantees equality between the sexes in all aspects of life, many administrative and cultural practices still discriminate against them. These situations obviously have a lot of implications for gender issues among the youth.

The socio-economic and cultural context of gender issues for the youth population in Zimbabwe is not clearly documented. Research on gender issues among the youth is needed. There is also a need to ensure that the contributions that young people can make toward national development and that of their communities is not limited or restricted because of gender.

There are many traditional and cultural practices that directly and indirectly hamper women's advancement. For example, the pledging of girls or marrying them off at tender ages which is still practiced by some communities tends to deprive them of care, education, proper marriage, etc. The customary position of women as perpetual minors and inferior to men also predisposes families to minimizing the advancement of women and girls. Customs and tradition also impose norms and values about the expected behaviors of men and women making the task of improving the status of women difficult. For example, the payment of lobola (dowry), which is still a very common practice, has a bearing on the role of women in a traditional society. Since men pay lobola to their in-laws in respect of their wives, many men and their families, and in some cases even the women's family, expect a subservient, loyal and obedient service from their wives.

Zimbabwe ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1991. Considerable progress has been made since then in a number of areas but there is much to be done to ensure that Zimbabwean youth enjoy greater gender equity and equality. In traditional Zimbabwean society (mainly patrilineal), male and female children are treated differently. Material and other advantages are bestowed on boys to a greater extent than girls because the benefits would stay with the family rather than enrich another one. Boys are traditionally socialized to become the economic agents of their families. Girls by contrast learn to keep house, tend crops, rear poultry and undertake other female duties. The Girl Child is exposed to stereotyped roles of motherhood which limits her creativity, unlike the boy child. Although many families, especially urban ones, have evolved away from these traditional divisions of gender roles, they continue to have an impact. Moreover girls are frequent targets of all forms of sexual abuse, child pledging and forced

prostitution and are also victims of child labour. Heavy domestic chores at an early stage for girls can also result in poor educational performance and high dropout rates.

#### 2.2.5 Culture, Sports and Recreation

Zimbabwe is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. The two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe are the Shonas and the Ndebeles constituting 74% and 18% of the Zimbabwean population respectively. There are other smaller ethnic groups which contribute to the diversity of the Zimbabwean culture.

Culture is the sum total of a way of life a society can offer in terms of material implements and possessions, in terms of intellectual and educational level of development, in terms of standards of living and ways of life, in terms of values and value systems, in terms of social relations between members of that society, in terms of arts and crafts and in terms of religion. One of the most important heritages of any nation is its culture. Culture also serves as the rallying point of national identity. Some cultures are retrogressive while others are progressive and compatible with development.

There are a number of factors which are creating changes in traditional cultural life. These include the impact of international media, the introduction of foreign cultures and the increasing urbanisation and education of much of the population. The extent to which young people find a base in their own culture appears to be diminishing as other cultural norms compete with traditional ones, and the pressure of modern life requires young people to search for new solutions. Social norms involve both what people typically do in all areas of life, and people's expectation of others. Understanding how such forces shape the lives of young people is fundamental to programming for adolescent health and development. Intervening with regard to social norms can involve tackling attitudes and practices that are harmful to young people.

The dynamism associated with modern life brings with it new risks for young people as they try to find appropriate role models and ways of behaving. In essence, the transition of Zimbabwean society compounds the problems experienced by young people and constitutes a major influence on behaviour. This influence can be shaped/channeled for positive effect.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes that the family is "the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members and particularly children." In Zimbabwe, the concept of the family has slowly transformed from a social group incorporating a large number of individuals related by blood and marriage over several generations to a social group incorporating just the nucleus of this extended group. The chief causes for this change include

labour migration to cities and commercial farms, formal education and Westernization that have undermined traditional values, and the introduction of a cash economy that has encouraged people to concentrate countable assets on satisfying their own needs. As the family has fragmented, its members have more individualistic and consequently less secure. In Zimbabwean families patriarchy and gerontocracy continue to be the chief determinants of power relations. Traditional Zimbabwean society vested virtually all political and economic authority in adult males. Chiefs, headmen, fathers and husbands had enormous power over the rest of the family. Two customs symbolically expressing a husband's authority over his family are his payment of brideprice to the wife's family to take possession of his bride and the bride's post-marital residence with his people. Age is owed honour and respect. Hence a child owes honour and respect to his parents, and should defer to their wishes, but there is no reverse obligation on the part of the parents to the child. (UNICEF, 1998).

There is lack of appropriate facilities and organization of sports and recreation for youth. Their participation in sports and recreation could counter-balance the threat of the spread of less desirable forms of behaviour such as the use of alcohol, drugs and other social ills. Furthermore, the weakening of the role of the family as a nucleus of socio-economic development coupled with the lack of sport and recreational facilities has contributed to the youth involvement in various forms of social ills.

## 2.3 Key Issues and Challenges Facing the Youth

### 2.3.1 Youth Issues in Development Plans, Policies and Programmes

Previous development plans have not addressed youth issues specifically but implicit in their various strategies one finds some aspects of the youth concerns considered such as in the areas of human resources development and employment. For example, the Three Year Medium-term Development Plan 1998-2000 seeks to address the following issues relevant to youth: inequitable land distribution and ownership; inadequate human resource base and relevant skills; and insufficient infrastructure development. Priority policy objectives mentioned in the plan include: creation of more employment opportunities; provision of infrastructure through increased capital budget and private sector participation; improvement in the provision of education and health services; and promotion of small and medium-scale enterprises.

The Zimbabwe Platform for Action (follow up to the 4th World Conference on Women) and the Zimbabwe Report on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have made several references related to youth issues, basically in terms of the "Girl Child" (education, tradition and culture, vulnerability?). The Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation 1996-2000 (ZIMPREST) has made

several references to youth concerns, in particular in relation to education and employment.

The Zimbabwe National Population Policy recognized that youth reproductive decisions and choices have much bearing on the future of the country in terms of population growth and other related issues and calls for a concerted effort to address their health, education and other needs. In its goals, objectives and strategies, the Population Policy has stated clearly what is to be done about youth issues in the context of the Population Policy.

The 1999 National HIV/AIDS Policy has devoted a whole section on children and young people, detailing their rights and freedom from discrimination related to HIV/AIDS and the strategies that should be followed.

In all the above, it is clear that the National Youth Policy should complement/be complemented by other social and economic policies. Each policy should follow not only its own guiding principles but also those of other policies.

### 2.3.2 Issues Raised During National and District Consultations

During the national and district consultations on the Youth Policy, the following key issues were raised:

- “ Unemployment. While all consultations raised unemployment as the key problem, in some districts this is considered as the root cause of all youth problems.
- “ Inadequacy of the educational system for current job markets in both the formal and informal sectors. The educational system is still too academic and does not prepare the youth for decision-making, entrepreneurship, and ability to participate in self-help programmes. In addition, there is high incidence of school dropouts due to rising school fees. This affects girls more than boys.
- “ Deteriorating health conditions as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and teenage pregnancy-related problems coupled with inadequate youth-friendly health services. Early sexual activity, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions etc. all contribute to deteriorating health conditions.
- “ Youth exploitation including sexual abuse, child labour, domestic abuse.
- “ Alcohol and substance abuse. This has become evident nationally leading to high levels of delinquency.
- “ Lack of information on youth development programmes, skills training courses, jobs, start-up funding for income generating activities, etc. Relevant youth information, education and communication activities (IEC) are lacking and when available place more emphasis on the don'ts than on do's. No channels of communications from the youth to policy makers. Lack of airtime on ZTV/ZBC.

- ∴ Lack of access to resources. The most commonly raised issue here is that the youth are not being given priority in the land distribution exercise. Lack of access to credit facilities due to collateral requirements has also been raised. General exclusion of the youth from the mainstream socio-economic and political sphere is the major hindrance for youth development.
- ∴ Lack of experience and exposure, family breakdown, lack of appropriate role models, and lack of youth centered development programmes are mentioned as problems.
- ∴ Lack of sports and recreation facilities.
- ∴ Limited availability and systematic use of demographic and socio-economic data and information for designing, monitoring and evaluating youth development programmes and strategies.
- ∴ Limited institutional and technical capacity for youth analysis, policy and strategy development and implementation.
- ∴ Marked gender inequalities in development opportunities, including access to productive resources, that reflects the low status of women in general and young women in particular.
- ∴ Most youth do not seek out reproductive health services until they have become pregnant or contracted a sexually transmitted disease.
- ∴ Cultural and economic barriers in which young women have little power to negotiate contraceptive or condom use.

### 2.3.3 Issues from Research /Analytical Reports

Various research results/documents pointed out that gaps still exist in the national response that contribute to the perpetuation of unacceptable degrees of vulnerability of adolescents and youth to sexual and reproductive health problems in Zimbabwe including:

- ∴ Inadequate focus on behaviour change and life skills methodologies;
- ∴ Unsupportive social environment for adolescent/youth sexual and reproductive health programming;
- ∴ Low coverage of youth in sexual and reproductive health programmes;
- ∴ Inadequate definition of adolescent-friendly services;
- ∴ Inadequate training and educational materials at all levels;
- ∴ Youth sexual and reproductive health needs overshadowed by pressing economic and recreational needs;
- ∴ Inadequate implementation, coordination and monitoring of youth sexual and reproductive health programmes;
- ∴ Inadequate youth participation;
- ∴ Lack of definition of youth problems and fragmented response to youth concerns;
- ∴ Lack of co-ordinated strategic plan to tackle youth issues; different organizations having different perspectives on youth development/programmes; duplication of youth activities;
- ∴ Inability to implement global plans of action for youth;
- ∴ Lack of pertinent information/data bank on youth programmes; no directory on youth organizations/associations for making appropriate decisions on youth programmes.

### **3 POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The National Youth Policy seeks to empower the youth by creating an enabling environment and marshalling the resources necessary for undertaking programmes to fully develop youth's mental, moral, social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and physical potential in order to improve their quality of life.

#### **3.1 Policy Goals**

The National Youth Policy seeks to achieve the following goals:

- (i) To contribute towards the participatory eradication of poverty and all forms of social and economic exclusion of the youth since poverty is one of the most formidable enemies of choice;
- (ii) To develop a coordinated response and participation by all stakeholders including government, non-government and private organizations for the development of the young women and men of the country;
- (iii) To promote healthy lifestyles and personal well being with particular emphasis on prevention of HIV/AIDS and promotion of reproductive health and care;
- (iv) To define and prioritize areas of specific action for youth progress in accordance with the overall policies of the Government and constitutional requirements of Zimbabwe.

#### **3.2 Policy Objectives**

The objectives of the National Youth Policy are to:

- (i) Systematically integrate youth issues into all policies, plans, programmes and strategies at all levels and within all sectors and institutions of government, NGOs and the private sector;
- (ii) Develop and implement programmes and interventions on all national youth concerns;
- (iii) Make available reliable and up-to-date information on the youth development situation in the country in order to inform policy making and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels and in all sectors;
- (iv) Promote youth participation in development activities;
- (v) Provide opportunities for youth employment and initiatives;
- (vi) Promote the value and development of vocational and skills training for the youth;
- (vii) Reduce the incidence of teenage and unplanned pregnancies;
- (viii) Reduce the spread of STDs, HIV/AIDS among the youth and their impact on the individual and society; reduce alcohol and substance abuse among the youth;

- (ix) Improve access for youth with disabilities to facilities and services, and promote prevention of disabilities;
- (x) Promote gender equality and equity among the youth, in particular, in education and training, socio-cultural, political, economic and legal spheres;
- (xi) Promote environmental education and active participation in environmental conservation among the youth;
- (xii) Ensure that adequate resources are directed towards youth development programmes;
- (xiii) Promote research and disseminate information on youth.
- (xiv) To advocate for the creation in youth a sense of belonging, patriotism and responsible citizenship;
- (xv) Sensitize the youth to the nation's socio-cultural values;

#### **4 KEY STRATEGIC AREAS**

The following strategic areas reflect the multi-sectoral nature of the youth policy and relate to a range of programmes that should be implemented by a variety of institutions in order to achieve the above stated objectives. These areas are therefore not the sole responsibility of a particular government institution; they cut across the line functions of various departments. It should be noted that, although the strategies have been grouped under particular headings for ease of reference, the groups of strategies are linked because of their reciprocal impacts. For example, improved education will impact on health, gender equality, employment etc.

##### **4.1 Education and Vocational Skills Training**

- (i) Periodically review and revise the education and training curricula to place increased emphasis on practical/vocational training to prepare and empower the youth for their roles in society and contributions to both formal and informal sectors;
- (ii) Expand family life and health education programmes;
- (iii) Expand educational facilities in order to accommodate the ever-increasing number of the youth; Distribute educational resources equitably;
- (iv) Expand youth skills training centres including entrepreneurship skills training and development in every district along with information technology centres;
- (v) Interpret the educational system in vernacular languages; provide family life education and life saving information;
- (vi) Establish and enhance career guidance and counseling services;
- (vii) Encourage full utilization of available training facilities for other youth activities;
- (viii) Integrate information, education, and communication strategies into all relevant youth programmes and advocate on youth issues.
- (ix) Strengthen community based support programme for children in especially difficult circumstances.

- (x) Advocate for establishment of participatory parent education programmes related to youth problems and parent-child communication.
- (xi) Identify and undertake priority research studies that will advance youth development;
- (xii) Establish adequate and valid linkages between education and employment;
- (xiii) Strengthen civic education programmes for the youth;
- (xiv) Promote industrial exposure to students; and
- (xv) Encourage participatory partnership between the educators, students and the community.

#### 4.2 Youth Employment and Access to Resources

- (i) Ensure that development strategies and programmes incorporate youth employment concerns;
- (ii) Encourage and develop specific youth-oriented programmes that improve the skills, productivity and experiences of young people through a range of institutions, including schools, vocational training centres, community organizations and NGOs;
- (iii) Encourage equal employment opportunities for the youth that have attained the age of majority, with particular attention to reducing gender inequities and inequalities;
- (iv) Establish a youth fund and encourage access to capital by the youth;
- (v) Ensure fair distribution of land for the youth who have reached legal age of majority and provide appropriate training for its utilization;
- (vi) Encourage youth participation in land distribution and conservation;
- (vii) Promote career guidance and counselling in both public and private sectors, to assist young people more efficiently in finding employment;
- (viii) Promote flexible working arrangements so that young people can avail themselves of on and off the job education and training opportunities in the context of agreed work place arrangements;
- (ix) Encourage enterprises to play an active role in the provision of continuous training to young employees;
- (x) Establish/encourage training programmes for promoting self-employment activities;
- (xi) Advocate for representation of youth in tripartite bodies and tripartite consultations.

#### 4.3 Youth Empowerment and Participation

Youth empowerment is the creation of an enabling environment for the youth to have the freedom to choose, to participate in and take decisions in matters affecting them and be ready to accept the consequences of their decisions. Empowerment enables the youth to be active participants in both the process and product of development. It has a democratizing impact. The



following strategies will be applied.

- (i) Involve young people during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes;
- (ii) Facilitate establishment of youth groups and youth NGOs, led and headed by the youth themselves and ensure their participation in decision-making processes at all levels;
- (iii) Promote the creation of a national youth forum for all youth and youth organizations;
- (iv) Facilitate the direct involvement of youth in national issues.

#### 4.4 Health, Population and Environment

- (i) Ensure consistency and complementarity of Youth Policy with the National Population Policy, the National HIV/AIDS Policy, the Reproductive Health Policy (forthcoming), and other related policies;
- (ii) Institute/strengthen education programmes engaging young people as peer educators and information deliverers on population, environment and reproductive health issues including HIV/AIDS, STDs, early pregnancy, illegal abortion, alcohol and substance abuse;
- (iii) Establish/strengthen youth-friendly health services, including reproductive health and youth counseling services and moral teaching/education in every district;
- (iv) Promote increased involvement of the private sector and NGOs in education on abstinence, deferment of sexual debut and provision of family planning and STD information and services, including moral education;
- (v) Empower teachers, parents, students, out of school youth and health service providers with necessary information and skills regarding youth, sexuality and sexual education through training workshops, meetings and distribution of information, education and communication (IEC) materials;
- (vi) Expand and create access to health services by young people regardless of age;
- (vii) Encourage communities, policy and decision-makers as well as health service providers toward removal of barriers to youth access to sexual and reproductive health information and services;
- (viii) Promote norms for small families, responsible sexual behaviour and male involvement in sexual and reproductive health;
- (ix) Raise awareness among the youth on environmental protection through both formal and informal environmental education and appropriate use of the media;
- (x) Involve young people in environmental protection and preservation.

#### 4.5 Gender Equality and Equity

- (i) Advocate for gender equality and equity from childhood;
- (ii) Make gender considerations a requirement for all youth programmes and projects before approval;

- (iii) Remove obstacles which militate against gender equality and equity; establish/continue affirmative programmes until such a time when gender equality and equity are achieved;
- (iv) Provide appropriate programmes aimed at improving the opportunities for girls in order to achieve gender equity in education; provide for girls and young women to continue with their education after they fall pregnant;
- (v) Discourage motherhood/fatherhood at a very young age since it is an impediment to improvements in the educational, economic and social status of the youth;
- (vi) Intensify programmes including behaviour change interventions to reduce the vulnerability of young girls/women and boys/men to early and unwanted sexual activity, sexual violence and sexually transmitted diseases;
- (vii) Strengthen the role of the family and community in improving the status of both girls and boys;
- (viii) Provide support for NGOs, particularly youth NGOs, in their efforts to promote the equality and participation of girls in society ;
- (ix) Review laws, policies and customary practices which hinder progress in gender equality and equity among the youth and advocate for change; amend and repeal all laws that discriminate on the basis of gender; enact laws that are fully empowering and create effective enforcement mechanisms.

#### 4.6 Culture, Sports and Recreation

- (i) Promote cultural values which are helpful for development and discourage those that hinder progress;
- (ii) Incorporate into the school curriculum, traditional dances, games, arts and craft, playing of musical instruments both traditional and foreign; encourage the teaching of arts and crafts among all categories of the youth;
- (iii) Advocate for the revival of the traditional concept of tetes/babakazi (aunts) and uncles, who give guidance and counselling to the young people, especially in the family environment;
- (iv) Promote youth participation in cultural activities thereby preserving it for posterity;
- (v) Motivate and encourage the private sector, religious organizations and NGOs in the development of sports and games for all categories of the youth;
- (vi) Ensure that the Sports and Recreation Councils Act provides for the sporting and recreation needs of the youth and facilitate the development, maintenance and renovation of sporting facilities in both rural and urban areas; revive traditional Zimbabwean games;
- (vii) Strengthen links between youth and the media to give voice to youth concerns and perspectives and to promote programmes on Zimbabwean cultures;
- (viii) Encourage and empower families in promoting cultural values;
- (ix) Promote the inclusion of subjects in educational curricula that will advance the various cultural values in Zimbabwe.

#### 4.7 Data and Research

- (i) Promote the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of socio-economic and demographic data on youth development, in particular data pertinent to the implementation of this Policy;
- (ii) Establish and continuously update statistical database and information system on youth development at both national sub-national levels;
- (iii) Ensure that data collected and analysed on youth issues are disaggregated by age, sex, geographical area and other attributes; and
- (iv) Promote relevant policy-oriented research on key youth issues.

#### 4.8 National Youth Service

The National Youth Service is a concept aimed at orienting the youth throughout the country to transform them into accepting realities of life through the following activities;

- (i) Advocate for the creation in youth a sense of belonging, patriotism and responsible citizenship
- (ii) Mobilise youth socially and economically in the development of the nation
- (iii) Establish and enhance national unity in the country
- (iv) Instill self discipline and vigilance against crime in the nation's youth
- (v) Sensitize the youth to the nation's socio-cultural traditions
- (vi) Impart productive work culture through on the job experiences and meaningful exposure to the world of work
- (vii) Promote the concept of volunteerism
- (viii) Facilitate direct participation and involvement of youth in national issues at all levels of governance
- (ix) Group young people into work bridges in both urban and rural areas
- (x) Afford youth the opportunities to exhibit their potentials

### **5 PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS**

The National Youth Policy is directed at the needs and aspirations of all the youth of the country. However, the following priority target groups are identified for special focus since they are in a more disadvantaged position than the overall youth population. These groups include adolescent girls, unemployed youth, HIV positive youth and orphans, street children/youth, young single mothers and youth with disabilities.

### **6 IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

The implementation of this policy depends on a sound institutional framework and active political, administrative and technical support for the translation of goals, objectives and strategies outlined in the Policy into actual programmes at all levels of society. As it is evident from the Policy, addressing youth concerns requires a multi-sectoral approach. Leaving such concerns to be

addressed by one ministry or one community-based agency will not be enough. A concerted and coordinated effort is required by government, non-government, and private institutions, churches, youth groups and community organizations to address youth issues in a comprehensive way. As the basic unit of society, the family will have an important role to play in implementing the policy. This requires an identification and elaboration of the mechanisms for collaboration and coordination. Immediately after the approval of the Policy, a comprehensive Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy will be prepared with the involvement of key stakeholders. The Action Plan will provide details on implementation and coordination mechanisms. Deliberate efforts will be made to utilize existing structures of government and civil society to implement the policy in order to avoid creating additional institutional frameworks, unless they are absolutely necessary. Some reorientation of functions and the establishment and/or strengthening of operational linkages will, however, be necessary. In brief, the following key institutions could be mentioned.

#### 6.1 The Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation

The MYDGEC will continue to be responsible for the coordination of youth affairs and shall oversee the implementation of the Youth Policy. The major functions of the Ministry through its Youth Service Section are:

- (i) Support of youth groups embarking on income-generating projects and provision of extension services;
- (ii) Development and implementation of a National Youth Policy;
- (iii) Establishment and coordination of the Zimbabwe Youth Council;
- (iv) Marketing of youth programmes and activities;
- (v) Facilitation of exchange programmes;
- (vi) Research, monitoring and evaluation of youth activities;
- (vii) Entrepreneurship skills training;
- (viii) Leadership development and advocacy through the Children's Parliament.
- (ix) Promote the full participation and involvement of youth in decision making at all levels including communities at local, district, provincial and at national level.
- (x) Co-ordination of the National Youth Service Programme.

The functions and responsibilities of sectoral ministries in the implementation of the Youth Policy will be clearly defined during the preparation of Action Plan. Here, it is necessary to point out the need for the establishment of a mechanism for inter-sectoral linkages (advisory/technical functions) for addressing the multi-sectoral objectives and strategies of the Policy.

#### 6.2 The Zimbabwe Youth Council

The functions and responsibilities of the Council according to the Amendment Act No.16 of 1997 are as follows:

a) Functions:

1. To co-ordinate, supervise and foster the activities of National Associations and clubs;
2. To ensure the proper administration of national associations and clubs;
3. To participate in national and international youth activities;
4. To advise the government on the needs of youth;
5. With the approval of the Minister, to undertake projects designed to create employment for young people, including fund raising, marketing and trading activities;
6. To be the sole register of all Youth Associations.

b) Responsibilities: (In relation to Registered National Associations)

1. Approving the annual estimates of such associations and receiving their audited annual accounts;
2. Advising such associations of Government policy and the manner in which they can assist the Government in carrying out that policy;
3. Generally advising, assisting and supervising such associations.

In order to encourage youth empowerment and participation in all aspects of development, the Government will promote the creation of a national youth forum outside the Government structure. Details on its formation and its functions will be outlined during the preparation of action plans.

### 6.3 National Youth Technical Committee (NYTC)

After the approval of the Policy, a multi-sectoral/multi-agency technical committee on youth will be established to reinforce the technical base required for decisions by the MYDGEC and the NYC and will generally have the following functions:

- (i) Provide expert advice and assist the Ministry and the Council to determine the appropriate programmes, tasks and working links among ministries, agencies, NGOs and other institutions working in youth and related fields;
- (ii) Suggest, provide and review, where necessary, appropriate guidelines which can assist the Ministry in carrying out its work efficiently in the area of youth and development;
- (iii) Advise the Ministry on key and relevant technical matters relating to the implementation of the youth and related programmes;
- (iv) Offer technical assistance in the implementation of UN and other global and regional recommendations on youth;
- (v) Advocate for youth issues; and
- (vi) Assist in the identification of research needs in the area of youth and development and contribute in research undertakings.

In order to establish this committee, the MYDGEC will contact the key partners in the development and implementation of the National Youth Policy

for identification and nomination of suitable candidates to serve in the committee.

#### 6.4. Sectoral Departments

The various ministries and departments, especially those in the social and economic sectors, have major responsibilities for the implementation of the Policy. Hence all existing and future sectoral and inter-sectoral policies and programmes must be oriented towards achieving the objectives of this Policy that are related to their own mandates. Sectoral departments at national and provincial levels will be sensitised and assisted technically to understand and interpret the relevance of this Policy for their respective line functions. Responsibilities of sectoral departments will be clearly defined during the preparation of Action Plan for the implementation of the Policy.

### **7. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES**

The attainment of the goals and objectives of this Policy hinges on the effective mobilization of resources, for the implementation of policy related programmes. It is envisaged that these resources will come from various sources. The Policy requires Government to provide adequate resources for its implementation.

Government shall mobilise adequate human and material resources to the programme for implementing the Policy. Government shall also mobilise community support, as well as support in cash and kind from private organizations in the country. External support shall also be mobilised, including technical and financial inputs, to ensure the successful implementation of the Youth Policy.

### **8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and evaluation are the means of assessing the implementation of the goals, objectives and strategies of the Youth Policy. Timely and periodic monitoring and evaluation shall be undertaken by the MYDGEC. In consultation with the National Youth Technical Committee, the MYDECC shall develop monitoring and evaluation guidelines to be used for implementing the Youth Policy and programmes. In addition, participating institutions in implementing the Youth Policy shall be encouraged to develop in-house monitoring and evaluation capabilities.