

# Republic of Zimbabwe



## Participant in the Study Visit

**Mrs Yvonne Mavhunga** currently serves as the Director of Programmes at the Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) of Zimbabwe, overseeing strategic initiatives aimed at improving national food and nutrition policies, strategies and programmes. She coordinates Assessments, Research, Monitoring and Evaluations providing technical lead in multi-sectoral annual livelihoods and nutrition surveys. She is a technical lead in working with the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Systems that keeps abreast with social vulnerability within the region, and to inform evidence-based humanitarian and development programmes, strategies and policies. She is a technical expert for the Working Party of Permanent Secretaries for Food and Nutrition Security in Zimbabwe and represents of FNC in Committees for resilience programming, disaster management and livelihoods programming. In her previous experience she worked as a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, for World Vision Zimbabwe under the Consortium for Southern African Food Security Emergency (C-SAFE) (USAID Food for Peace grant). She holds a Master of Science degree from the Women's University in Africa on Development Studies and Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Biology and Biochemistry from the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe.

## Nutrition Facts

Zimbabwe is making encouraging strides toward improving nutrition. According to data from State of Food Security and Nutrition 2025, the country has advanced in increasing exclusive breastfeeding, with 42.4% of infants aged 0 to 5 months now exclusively breastfed. The national implementation score of legal measures related to the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes is 81 (out of a maximum of 100). Zimbabwe is well positioned to meet global targets for both stunting and wasting, with 23.7% of children under five affected by stunting— significantly below the Eastern Africa regional average of 31.2%—and a wasting rate of 5.1%, slightly higher than the Eastern Africa regional average of 4.9%. The prevalence of overweight children under five sits at 4.0%, a slight decrease from the 4.5% rate in 2012, and Zimbabwe looks set to prevent this figure from rising. Additionally, no progress has been achieved in reducing anaemia among women of reproductive age. It affects 27.5% of women aged 15 to 49, an increase from 25.9% in 2012. In contrast, very little progress has been made in reducing low birth weight, which remains at 11.8%.

## Nutrition Policies

The Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security Strategy for Zimbabwe, MFNSS (2023–2025) is a national policy framework adopted by Cabinet in 2023. It aims to promote and ensure adequate food and nutrition security for all Zimbabweans, recognizing the vulnerabilities intensified by economic and climate challenges. Designed to align with and operationalize the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1, 2021–2025), the strategy focuses on key sectors such as agriculture, health, education, social protection, local government, and women and gender affairs, among others.

The strategy defines seven key results: policy analysis and advice; agriculture and food security; social protection; food safety, quality, and standards; nutrition security; food and nutrition information, assessments, analysis and early warning; and capacity enhancement for food and nutrition security. Its approach is firmly multisectoral, recognizing that genuine improvement requires coordinated action across agriculture, health, livelihoods, governance, nutrition services and beyond.

Developed through wide-ranging stakeholder consultations, including citizens and cooperating partners, the MFNSS emphasizes inclusive, sustainable, and resilient socio-economic growth. It reinforces decentralized implementation, with Local Development Councils positioned at the front line of coordination and accountability for nutrition and food security interventions. Enhanced monitoring is also a core component, aimed at improving resource use, strengthening collaboration across government sectors, and ensuring progress toward Vision 2030—a prosperous and empowered upper-middle-income society.

## School Nutrition Programme

Zimbabwe implements two key initiatives to support child nutrition in schools: the School Feeding Programme and the School Nutrition Programme. The School Feeding Programme provides at least one hot meal daily to students, primarily targeting rural schools affected by drought and economic challenges. This programme has expanded to include secondary schools and emphasizes sourcing of food locally and involving communities around the schools to ensure sustainability. Its main goal is to improve student attendance, retention, and learning by addressing hunger.

On the other hand, the School Nutrition Programme takes a broader approach to child health and nutrition. Led by the Ministry of Health and Child Care in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, this programme includes nutrition screening, micronutrient supplementation, nutrition education, and physical activity promotion alongside school meals. Piloted in selected districts, it aims to improve the overall nutritional status and well-being of pupils, focusing not only on feeding but also on health education and holistic nutrition.

## Zimbabwe is a member of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.

### Engagement with the Healthy Diets Coalition

Zimbabwe will join the Healthy Diets Coalition, bringing strong lessons on multi-sectoral coordination initiatives to the global platform. The Food & Nutrition Council has established over 300 Food and Nutrition Security Committees across provincial, district, and ward levels, ensuring nutrition interventions reach the grassroots with effectiveness and cohesion. Zimbabwe's Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (2023–2025) integrates health, agriculture, education, and water sectors, reflecting its systems approach to food security. Membership will enable Zimbabwe to share its experiences at global fora while also benefiting from peer-to-peer learning with other countries. Membership involves no financial commitments, and remains available for any clarifications.

### N4G Commitments

1. **Impact:** Reduce the prevalence of under-five stunting from 23.7 % to 17% by 2025 (extend to 2030).
2. **Programmatic/Interventional:** Ensure functional multi-sectoral implementation structures, accountability, monitoring and evaluation of food and nutrition security interventions.
  - a. Avail food and nutrition security information for policy, programming and targets tracking by 2030.
  - b. Strengthen multi-disciplinary research to improve Maternal, Infant, Young Child and Adolescent Nutrition (MIYCAN) in Zimbabwe and Africa.
3. **Financial:** Ensure that investment allocations for social services are responsive to nutrition requirements (including health, agriculture, education and social protection). (Ring-fence proportion of the revenue from the fast foods & sugar taxes for nutrition interventions)
4. **Enabling:** Review and Establish nutrition sensitive food legislation and legal frameworks (Food and Food Standards Act, school food environment,) Nutrition Labelling.

### Remaining Challenges

Zimbabwe is making significant progress in improving maternal, infant, and young child nutrition, supported by strong national policies, strategies and programmes. The country's multisectoral strategies and school nutrition initiatives are laying a solid foundation for better health and nutrition outcomes across the population.

Despite this, some ongoing challenges remain, including:

- Diet quality- Minimum Acceptable diet remains low.
- The School Feeding Meals were supported by Government during the El Niño induced drought 2023/24, with a significant amount of mealie-meal and grain delivered to schools. There is need to improve on meal diversity.
- Adolescent Nutrition Programming needs to be scaled up.
- Operationalization of school health and nutrition guidelines beyond partner supported districts.
- Capacity development for national and decentralised multi-sectoral structures to accelerate and deepen institutionalisation and accountability for nutrition outcomes.
- There is need for Government to commit more resources towards nutrition specific and sensitive activities. The domestic nutrition budget needs to go beyond operations and disbursements need to be decentralized to district and sub-district level with a focus on programme implementation (Care groups around established community Food and Nutrition Security infrastructure, school nutrition programmes, maternal health, decentralized Food and Nutrition Security governance structures, Early Childhood Development).
- The country needs to urgently invest in equitable preventive public health programmes, including scaling up investments in child nutrition, health promotion and education, all through a multisectoral approach. These need to be costed.