**Session 4 : Investing is Social Spending, Tackling Inequalities and Promoting Economic Policies that advance Greater Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

**7 February 2023**

Thank You Chair

The devastating impact of the Covid pandemic on lives and livelihoods dramatically demonstrated the importance of addressing economic and social inequalities within our countries and at global levels.

In response to the pandemic and current global crises, Zimbabwe is implementing policies aimed at revitalizing the economy and providing relief to affected individuals, families, small businesses and industries. In addition to a strong focus on agricultural development, the Government is prioritizing health and education.

Under our National Health Strategy, 11% of the 2023 Budget is allocated to the health sector - proof of our commitment to the provision of quality health services, including the construction and rehabilitation of health facilities nationwide : and ensuring that all such facilities are within a 5 km radius of human settlements.

Similarly, 18,5 % of the 2023 Budget is allocated towards Education ; covering the ongoing construction and rehabilitation of schools, ensuring that all public schools are connected to digital platforms, supporting school-feeding programmes and the recruitment and remuneration of teachers.

In terms of broader social protection, our Government is implementing a raft of programmes , including cash transfers, food deficit mitigation, basic education and health assistance, child protection, and support to the elderly and those with disabilities.

The digitalisation of Government procurement services is designed to enhance efficient utilisation of scarce resources and to curb both leakage and corruption.

Such efforts at national level should be supported by a restructuring of global production and supply systems for critical goods and services - within the context of addressing lingering inequalities in the pace and depth of post-Covid recovery.

We would also support urgent dialogue on debt restructuring to address the vulnerabilities of developing countries and to provide greater fiscal space to support social spending.

I Thank You