PRESS RELEASE

Building resilience under COVID-19 - SEK 15 million investment for water and sanitation development

Harare, June 4, 2020: The Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe has increased their investment in resilience building for vulnerable Zimbabweans with an additional 15 million Swedish Kroner (about US $1.6 million).

As in many countries around the globe, COVID-19 is impacting the most vulnerable population and gains made in building their resilience needs to be protected. The grant will be used to strengthen water, sanitation and hygiene activities implemented under the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF). Priority will be on rehabilitating existing water sources to ensure availability of the precious resource.

“COVID-19 has heightened the need for hygiene and hence access to safe water. With water sources already affected by unpredictable rainfall, the availability of water is key to prevent protect farmers from losing the progress made over the past four years and mitigate their exposure to COVID-19” said Sweden’s Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Her Excellency Åsa Pehrson.

UNDP Resident Representative, Georges van Montfort added “Water has become a precious resource in much of Southern Africa and Zimbabwe is no exception to this. This additional support from Sweden allows us to invest in water for agriculture and livestock as well as in response to increased hygiene requirements due to COVID-19. As such, it addresses the immediate needs, while at the same time it lays the foundation for long-term development.”

Zimbabwe received less than average rainfall in both the 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 farming seasons. As a result, an estimated 5.5 million rural and 2.2 million urban people were left food
insecure. In addition, the global health pandemic COVID-19, is projected to further adversely affect farmers and their supply and value chains.

The ZRBF is a multi-donor fund working with small-scale farmers in 18 vulnerable districts on building their resilience to such shocks and stresses.

Some of the key results achieved by the fund over the past four years include reaching 873,331 people with resilience building activities, of which 505,426 were women; increasing their average household monthly income to $78.60 per month; 80% of households now practise climate smart agriculture; and 74% of the households now have access to a variety of foods.

Sweden is one of the contributors to the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF). Others are the European Union, UK Department for International Development, Denmark and United Nations Development Programme.

For more information and media interviews, contact:

**Anesu Freddy**
Communications Associate, United Nations Development Programme
anesu.freddy@undp.org

**Lina Bergqvist**
Communication and Promotion Officer, Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe
lina.bergqvist@gov.se