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## **UNDP Zambia and Partners Launch Safe Markets Project Ensuring business continuity in markets with compliance to COVID-19 measures**

**Lusaka, Zambia, 17 February 2021:** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Lusaka City Council (LCC) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) today launched the pilot phase of the Safe Markets, Safe Communities project, an initiative towards ensuring that community markets are compliant to COVID-19 public health regulations. The initiative is co-funded by UNDP and the Governments of Sweden and Ireland.

“The project will strengthen knowledge and individual collective responsibilities toward adhering to public health regulations and prevent the spread of the deadly virus in our markets,” says Lusaka Deputy Mayor, Christopher Shakafuswa.

“As Lusaka City Council, we would like to thank the United Nations Development Programme for supplementing government’s efforts towards the fight against COVID-19 in markets and look forward to a successful partnership in executing identified activities efficiently” the Lusaka Deputy Mayor said.

The event which was restricted to only 14 guests, in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures, had in attendance the Lusaka Deputy Mayor, Christopher Shakafuswa, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Roland Seri, the Ministry of Health’s Director of Public Health, Dr. Andrew Silumesi, the LCC’s Director of Public Health, Edgar Mulwanda and the LCC’s Director of Housing and Social Services, Danny Chibinda along with three representatives from Nyumba Yanga, Chilenje and Lilanda Markets that were selected for the pilot phase.

Handing over an assortment of equipment, cleaning and awareness creation materials to the Lusaka City Council, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Roland Seri emphasized the need to help protect the livelihoods of women and youth who work in markets by enabling them continue their activities while adhering to COVID-19 measures.

“Markets have not only served as sources of affordable food to most households in the country but help to provide a means of income generation for the many women and youth that have set up livelihood ventures in these places. It is the protection of this means of income that makes this intervention robust as it is aimed at ensuring business continuity in potentially high COVID-19 risk places,” Seri said.

Speaking through a video message, the Swedish Ambassador to Zambia, Her Excellency, Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård said that the project would ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women by implementing affirmative action for sustaining women’s economic activities in the selected markets.



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“The launch of the safe markets project is an example of efforts to reduce vulnerability to Gender Based Violence by addressing the economic disempowerment of women resulting from restrictions around COVID-19. The safe markets will enable women, which are the majority of traders in the market, to continue trading in a way that minimizes or at least limits the risk of COVID-19”, said Ambassador Hultgård.

UNDP is supporting the Safe Markets initiative as part of the UN Zambia support to the Government’s response to COVID-19. UNDP hopes that by collectively rethinking and adapting existing market models to COVID-19 Compliant Models, community behaviour will be positively impacted, thus leading to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 arising from community ownership while preserving the livelihoods of communities.

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