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**Adaptation to climate change among agropastoral systems: case for Zimbabwe**

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Climate change is an additional constraint to sustainable socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. The increasing frequency and severity of droughts and floods, the periodic shift in onset of the rains, and increasing intensity of mid-season dry spells in the last 50 years have been identified in the Initial National Communications (1996) and other recent studies (for example Tadross et al, 2008) as a major consequence of climate change. The IPCC fourth assessment report (2007) concludes that Africa will experience increased levels of water stress and reduced agricultural yields by up to 50% by 2020 because of climate change. Livelihoods of the poor, particularly women who are highly dependent on agriculture, are likely to be impacted by climate change in various ways. Recognizing this problem, a Government of Zimbabwe – UNDP/GEF supported pilot adaptation project is being implemented in support of vulnerable agropastoral communities in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe over the period 2008-2012. The primary objective of the Coping with Drought and Climate Change Project is to demonstrate and promote adoption of a range of gender segregated approaches for adaptation to climate change among rural communities currently engaged in agriculture in vulnerable areas of Chiredzi District as a national model. Specific objectives of this project include: to develop local capacity to expand the knowledge base on climate change for effective adaptation in the agriculture sector; to demonstrate a range of viable longterm livelihood adaptation options to manage climate variability and change among men and women agropastoralists in Chiredzi district based on identified climate risks; to develop local capacity to use climate early warning systems to strengthen adaptation/livelihood strategies in Chiredzi district; and to disseminate project generated lessons and foster public awareness about potential impacts of climate change to encourage policy changes that encourage adaptation. Three adaptation approaches, namely: addressing vulnerability, building response capacity and managing climate risk are used in the project. Preliminary lessons for adaptation initiatives are emerging from the inception phase of this project. The lessons, challenges and experiences emerging revolve around: the role of climate information, traditional and contemporary social systems/institutions, and perceptions of role players and approaches for adaptation. The project illustrates the importance of systematic local level climate risk assessment and generating climate change scenarios at appropriate spatial and temporal scales for formulation of adaptation options at a local scale. It also emerges that, often poverty and other core causes of vulnerability need to be addressed first before impact-oriented adaptation efforts can be effective. References Government of Zimbabwe (1996). Initial National Communications to the UNFCCC. Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Harare.

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