



## **NON-GOVERNMENTAL GENDER ORGANIZATIONS' COORDINATING COUNCIL (NGOCC)**

*“Sustaining Gains for Continued Solidarity for Women’s Empowerment”*

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### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2027**

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## ACRONYMS

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHAZ	Churches Health Association of Zambia
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEEA	Gender Equity and Equality Act
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOs	Member Organizations
MTR	Mid Term Review
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Gender Organization Coordinating Council
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
ToC	Theory of Change
UPND	United Party for National Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
SO	Strategic Objective
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: NGOCC’ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis .	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 2: Theory of Change 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 3: NGOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Objectives .....	12
Figure 4: NGOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Indicator Framework .....	18

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Non-governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC) Governing Board, Management, staff and the entire network would like to express gratitude to everyone who contributed to the development of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan. NGOCC recognises the support and guidance provided by the Board in charting the next phase of NGOCCs aspirations towards supporting the empowerment of women.

The Strategic Plan is the principal tool for the NGOCC Secretariat and by extension the network to coordinate and advocate for greater gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls. NGOCC remains indebted to the Cooperating Partners for their continued support to the gender agenda and the women's movement in general. We are particularly grateful to the Swedish Embassy, European Union (EU), IM Swedish, Global Fund – CHAZ, Diakonia, We Effect, Carter Center, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Action Aid, Water Aid and other partners for supporting the Strategic Plan whose timeline ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

NGOCC additionally acknowledges the commitment to collaboration by the MOs despite a challenging operational environment in view of the devastating impact of the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic and the shrinking civic space experienced particularly in the tail end of the last Strategic Plan. The positive contributions and outlook on women's empowerment by MOs is testimony of nearly 40 years of building credible and mutually beneficial partnerships. Finally, NGOCC recognises the contribution of women and girls in advancing their own cause under extremely challenging circumstances.



Anne Mbewe-Anamela

Executive Director

## Table of Contents

<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	i
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	iii
<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	vi
<b>1.0 ABOUT US &amp; THE CHALLENGE</b> .....	1
The challenges .....	1
About Us .....	1
<b>2.0 VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES</b> .....	2
2.3 ORGANISATIONAL VALUES .....	2
2.1 VISION STATEMENT .....	2
2.2 MISSION STATEMENT .....	2
Socio-political Challenge .....	3
Government Policy Challenge .....	3
<b>3.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS - STRATEGIC PLAN 2023–2027</b> .....	3
Economic Challenge .....	4
CLIMATE CHALLENGE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT .....	4
Evolving Context for Women’s & Girls’ Empowerment .....	5
<b>4.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS</b> .....	5
The Challenge .....	6
Context of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis .....	7
NGOCC’s SWOT Analysis .....	8
<b>5.0 THEORY OF CHANGE – 2023-2027 sTRATEGIC PLAN</b> .....	9
NGOCC’s Change Imperative .....	9
<b>6.0 TRANSLATING TOC INTO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b> .....	11
6.1 Overview .....	11
SO1: Improved Cultural Norms, Practices and Beliefs Towards Gender Equity and Equality .....	11
SO3: Improved Resilience Through Women and Girls’ Empowerment .....	11
SO4: Improved Organisational Capacity .....	11
<b>7.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES &amp; RESULTS framework</b> .....	12

7.1 Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): IMPROVED cultural norms, practices and beliefs towards gender equity and equality.....	13
7.2 Strategic Objective 2: IMPROVED Policy/legal frameworks FOR women and girl's empowerment.....	14
7.3 Strategic Objective 3: IMPROVED resilience through women and girls against empowerment.....	15
7.4 Strategic Objective 4: IMPROVED Organizational Capacity.....	16
7.5 CLIMATE CHANGE as A cross cutting OPPORTUNITY .....	17
7.6 commitment to inclusion.....	17
<b>8.0 INDICATOR FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>9.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION &amp; LEARNING (MEL) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
9.1 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING .....	19
<b>10.0 STRATEGIC PLAN Budget.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## FOREWORD

ADVOCACY for greater gender equality and women’s empowerment in Zambia has over the years gained momentum, though much still needs to be done. In the last five (5) year Strategic Plan period, NGOCC secretariat and the membership continued to undertake various advocacy initiatives in the quest for gender equality and empowerment. This was despite the challenging environment that characterised the just ended strategic plan due to the advent of COVID-19 and shrinking civic space.

While Zambia enacted the Gender Equity and Equality Act (GEEA) in 2015, as a way to domesticate some of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the policy and legal framework still remains inadequate to support greater gender equality and women’s empowerment. Further, the environment is constrained by the entrenched patriarchy buttressed by some negative customs and traditions.

Despite the challenges, NGOCC, MOs continued to implement activities aimed at empowering women and girls in Zambia.

NGOCC, as the focal point of the women’s movement, has been influential in advocating for the review, formulation and implementation of gender sensitive and responsive national programmes, policies, and legislation across all socioeconomic sectors. NGOCC’s overall goal is to enable, magnify and support the role of women and girls as key contributors to social cultural, political and economic development of Zambia.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, disrupted the implementation of the ending Strategic Plan, negatively impacting women and increasing their vulnerability in many aspects. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that despite progress on many fronts, the situation of women and girls’ empowerment is fragile and vulnerable to calamities.

The pandemic has also revealed inequities in access to resources and services for young people in education. The six-month closure of schools in 2020 for non-examination classes and delayed reopening in 2021 not only disrupted learning but inadvertently pushed learners, adolescent girls especially, out of school. Teenage pregnancies spiraled with over 16,400 adolescent girls falling pregnant in 2020, three thirds of whom were from the primary education level.

Alongside health impacts many countries reported a surge of violence against women and girls (VAWG), as well as violence against children, according to the UN and World Health Organisation. In Zambia the increase in reported cases of violence against Women (VAW) since the start of the Covid 19 crisis was driven by several factors. Households experienced economic hardships due to restricted movements hence negatively affecting livelihoods, especially for those who were working in the informal sector. Confinement at home under heightened levels of stress, uncertainty and fear facilitated stressful environments that precipitated violence. Furthermore, the risk of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights information and services was compromised. For example, maternity wards in Zambia reduced the number of beds to meet social distancing requirements and restricted access to family planning services hence increasing risks to maternal health and inadvertently potentially leading to an increase in maternal mortality and unplanned pregnancies especially among teenagers.

The six-month closure of schools in 2020 for non-examination classes and delayed reopening in 2021 not only disrupted learning but also

Politically, the transition to UPND’s reign ended an era that had diminished the authority of state institutions and concentrated resources in the hands of a few mostly male dominated groups. It is a fact that the political economy of any country drives the economic and development agenda. The exclusion of women therefore from decision making positions remains one of the challenges in achieving sustainable development in Zambia.

Over the years, women have remained on the peripheries and have been excluded from both participating and benefiting from the various development processes. More specifically, women's voices remain scarce at Parliamentary and local government levels. Incidents of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) remain rife and have been on the upswing over the years. Statistics provided by the Zambia Police Service in the fourth quarter of 2021 showed that over 80% of the 7,920 cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) reported were against women and girls. Sexual abuse against children is also high with girls at an alarming 74% of the total

While the Government of Zambia's (GRZ) has made commitments to safeguard the social sectors during austerity periods as well as to deal with the country's debt crisis, there is still a lot of advocacy work needed to ensure that women's empowerment remains front and center of government policy and legislative action. Climate change concerns, economic turmoil, poverty, violence against children and women, including abductions of young women involved in economic activities, socioeconomic losses and the need for sustainable human existence all pose a significant challenge for NGOCC to devise solutions to improve the quality of life and opportunities for women, especially the poor.

Therefore, through the 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan, NGOCC will continue to reposition itself to sustain and significantly improve on the marginal gains made thus far to build solidarity for women's empowerment. This Strategic Plan which is anchored on a Human Rights approach, will therefore, act as the blueprint towards the achievement of the overall goal which is "*A favorable society where women and girls actualize their rights by 2027*". Adaptive programming will be the essence of the Strategy as will the use of technology solutions to better reach NGOCC's over three million targeted population with effective gender transformative interventions.



Grace Manyonga-Sinkamba

**Board Chairperson**

## 1.0 ABOUT US & THE CHALLENGE

### ABOUT US

Established in 1985, the Non-Governmental Gender Organizations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC) is an umbrella organisation active in coordinating and strengthening member organisations (MOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) working to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in Zambia.

NGOCC has been influential in advocating for the review, formulation and implementation of gender sensitive and responsive national programmes, policies, and legislation across all socioeconomic sectors. NGOCC's overall goal is to enable, magnify and support the role of women as key contributors to the social cultural, political and economic development of Zambia. It has since grown to be the focal point and voice of the Women's movement in Zambia.

The objectives of NGOCC as stated in its constitution (amended 2022) are to:

- Be an umbrella organisation for non-governmental organisations focusing on gender and development issues, with special attention on empowerment of women;
- Coordinate and strengthen member organisations' links with other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), the government and international agencies in order to create a vibrant women's movement.
- Generate, collect and disseminate information which will encourage and facilitate member NGOs in their efforts for women's empowerment.
- Facilitate capacity building of MOs when the need arises.
- Develop cooperation with like-minded organisations at national, regional and international level; and
- Be the voice and pressure group for member organisations on gender and development issues.

As the lead organization on gender issues and in particular issues that affect women, NGOCC works to deliver social, economic, cultural and political commitments on women's empowerment to over two million women and girls countrywide through various interventions. The Secretariat working through and with its MOs collaboratively influence the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and its cooperating partners to achieve creative policy and legislative solutions to issues of women's empowerment through interventions for transformative political, cultural, economic and social development.

### THE CHALLENGES

The triple C crisis which occurred during the previous strategic plan period saw Child marriage at 31% while Climate Change impacts and Covid 19 exerted simultaneous effects on women and girls. COVID-19 exposed the deep inequities that still impede the participation of women as key contributors to the social cultural, political and economic development of Zambia. Despite the GRZ's commitment to safeguarding social sectors and dealing with the country's debt crisis, strong advocacy work is still needed to ensure that women's empowerment and participation remain at the core of government policy and legislative action.

Climate change concerns, economic turmoil, poverty, violence against children and women, including abductions of young women involved in economic activities, socioeconomic losses and the need for sustainable human existence all pose a significant challenge for NGOCC to devise solutions to improve the quality of life and opportunities for women, especially the poor.

The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan is NGOCC's call to recommit to the challenge of women's empowerment drawing on nearly 40 years of credible experience, knowhow and transformative work. During this strategic plan period, NGOCC will leverage technology solutions and challenge MOs to be innovative so that the collective efforts result in deepened empowerment of women and enduring gender transformation.

## 2.0 VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES

### 2.1 VISION STATEMENT

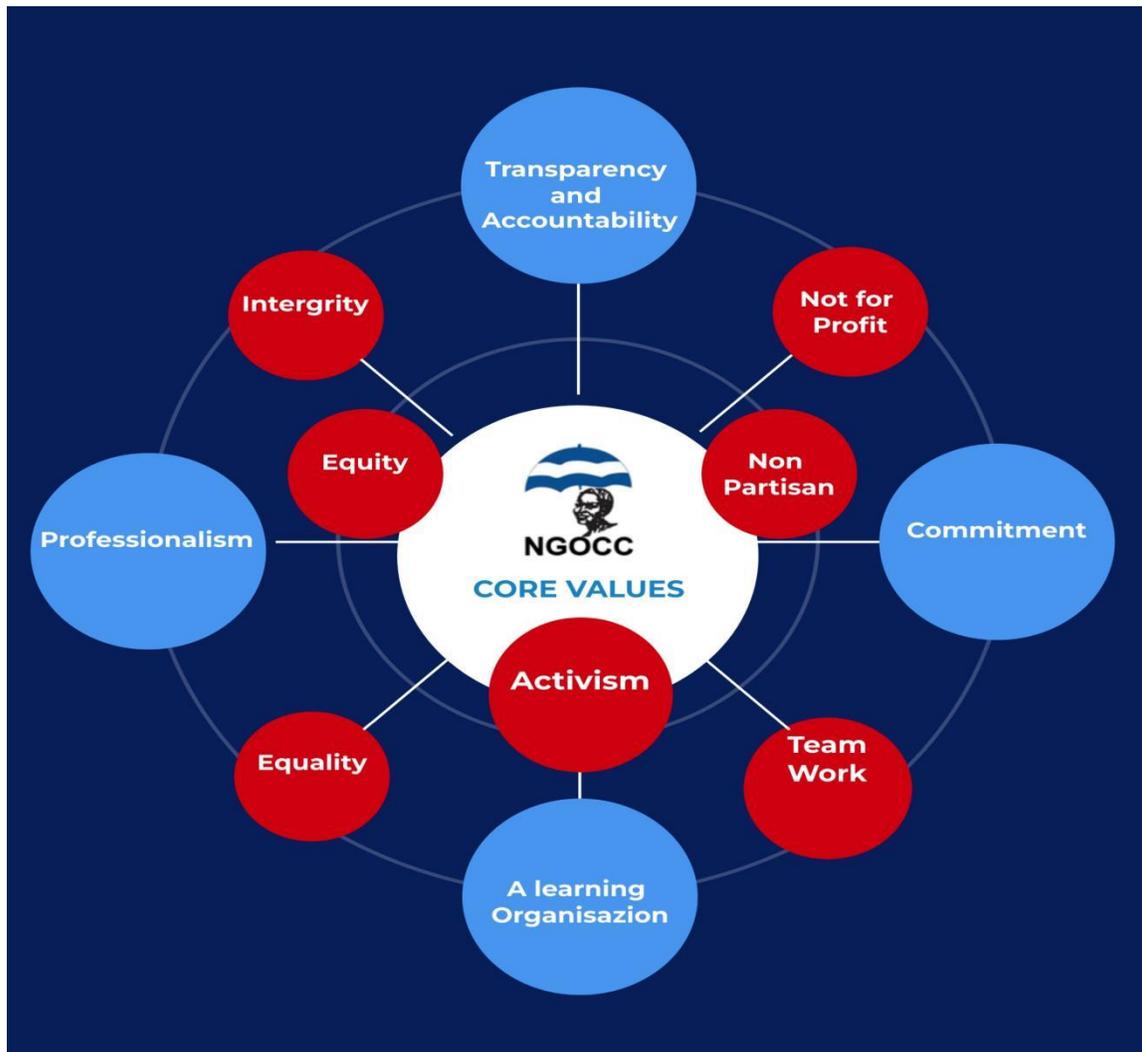
A society where women are empowered and fully participate in social, cultural, economic and political development.

### 2.2 MISSION STATEMENT

To promote women's empowerment for gender equality through coordinated advocacy, capacity development of member organisations and linkages with government, local and international partners.

### 2.3 ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

Figure 1: NGOCC core values:



### 3.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS - STRATEGIC PLAN 2023–2027

#### SOCIO-POLITICAL CHALLENGE

Profoundly embedded in everyday life, politics remains an overriding factor in the empowerment of women and girls. The 2021 change of government was a demonstration that citizens still retain their constitutional right to elect leaders of their choice. Political change provided an opportunity for further engagement regarding the uplifting of the plight of women and girls especially around the authority of state institutions for safeguarding and improving the security of women and children.

For young voters and women, who represented over 50% of registered voters, the election outcome sets up a long-term commitment and confidence in the electoral process.

However, despite women being the majority registered voters, low numbers of women were elected to political positions in the 2021 general elections. Political parties have continued to favour men in the adoption processes, keeping women on the margins of political influence. The nation also fails to mitigate sexual violence against female candidates as well as cyber bullying thereby reducing the women's voice in governance and decision-making platforms.

Only four (14%) women out of 25 sit in cabinet and only one (from 10) is a provincial minister.

Of 1,858 councilors elected across the country a measly 141 (7.6%) were women, and 15 (12%) mayors/council chairpersons out of 116. The president used his prerogative to nominate eight additional Members of Parliament but only nominated two women.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY CHALLENGE

Zambia has made strides in introducing progressive policies and legislation which promote gender equality and women's empowerment enshrined in the National Constitution and the Gender Equity and Equality Act (GEEA) as well as the Gender Based Act amongst others. However, the challenge lies in the full implementation of these progressive policy provisions. For example, the Gender Equity and Equality Commission has not been established despite that it is provided for under (GEEA).

The National Gender Machinery which is key in ensuring gender equality keeps changing depending on the position of the political leadership in power the latest being the scrapping of the Ministry of Gender by the current government.

Government has made positive strides towards implementation of the Decentralisation Policy as evidenced by the increased allocation to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the inherent allocations for women and youth empowerment. However, access to CDF has been challenging due to the bureaucratic processes as well as low-capacity levels around project proposal writing and general ability to adequately fill in forms which are partly attributable to low literacy levels.

In building resilience, resource transfer mechanisms such as the (CDF) must ensure increased local influence of women and girls. Furthermore, CDF allocations remain highly centralised.

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## **ECONOMIC CHALLENGE**

With 58% of Zambians recorded as poor in 2020, 2.3 million more fell into poverty adding to the 8.4 million that were already poor in 2015, increasing the population needing social protection (World Bank,2022). The country's debt crisis and need for austerity coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic have all had a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods significantly compounding the economic disadvantages women and girls face.

Of the 58% of Zambia's population classified as living in poverty, women (60% extreme poverty) are poorer than men (CSO,2015). Women also make up only 39.5% of the informal sector compared with 60.5 percent for men. This entails that women are falling behind even in areas of economic activity with ease of entry.

Accordingly, the GRZ's drive to promote small businesses and open opportunities to exploit regional and international markets must prioritise safeguarding the human rights of women and girls to safe and decent economic opportunities, financial services, social networks, social protection, inclusion, equality of opportunity and supportive policy and legislative reform.

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## **CLIMATE CHALLENGE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Climate change extremities implore a changed approach to empowerment of women and girls. Poor people depend on the environment for livelihoods, calling for innovative approaches to poverty reduction and empowerment efforts. Zambia has made significant climate change commitments that will affect women and girls the most.

As women are most involved in agriculture and selling of agricultural produce, their livelihoods are most affected too. Accordingly, there is need for alternative income generation activities and skills as well as adaptation to innovative ways of farming. There is specifically a need for women to adopt new farming technologies that help to cope with climate change.

## 4.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

### EVOLVING CONTEXT FOR WOMEN'S & GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT

Since its establishment in 1985 and a few years short of attaining the age of 40 (in 2025), NGOCC is confronted with the challenge of remaining relevant in a rapidly evolving operational context. NGOCC was established before the current technological advancement and now operates in a largely social media-driven world. The existence of social media platforms in the lives of women and girls presents opportunities and challenges for NGOCC's 2023-2027 strategic plan.

Despite the technology leap and its impact on economic life, women and girls, however, remain perpetually dependent, and marginalized in livelihood activities.

That women are economically marginalised leads to their dependency on men and vulnerability even in terms of disease burden. For example, Zambia's high HIV prevalence (11.1%) for the 15-49 age group has higher infection rates for women (14.2%) compared to that of men (7.5%) (Zambia Demographic and Health Survey DHS 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated gender gaps, reversing decades of gains for women and girls in areas like human capital and economic empowerment, impacts which threaten to have a bearing on humanity for years to come (UN ESCAP, 2021).

These occurrences continue to reveal inequities that challenge the treatment of women as a homogenous group and perpetuate gender gaps. The diversity of circumstances requires addressing intersectionality among target groups. The different identities based on age, marital status, whether female headed household, locality (where one lives, rural urban), education level, employment and occupation, social status/household wealth (poor, middle class, rich) must be considered to drive responsive women's and girls' empowerment programming.

Zambia has enacted various pieces of legislation to ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender in all sector policies, laws, plans, and programmes. These pieces of legislation include the 2016 Amended Republican Constitution, the Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2015, and the National Gender Policy. Part II of the Republican Constitution recognises equity, equality and non-discrimination as important national values and principles.

Further, on nominations and appointments, the Constitution in Article 259 (b) clearly outlines the need for gender parity noting in Article 259 that: (1) Where a person is empowered to make a nomination or an appointment to a public office, that person shall ensure— (b) that fifty percent of each gender is nominated or appointed from the total available positions, unless it is not practicable to do so. Additionally, Article 45, on the Electoral systems and process also speaks to the "fair representation of the various interest groups in society" and more specifically gender equality in the National Assembly or Council.

Zambia is also party to regional and international protocols on gender equality and women's empowerment including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development; the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of Children; and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

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## THE CHALLENGE

The activism of the past nearly 40 years by NGOCC and other players have improved the lives of women and girls through various ways including enactment of the legislation that protects their rights and policies that have enabled women more access to resources and public services such as education and health.

Despite the steps taken to legally secure the rights of women and girls, the commitments are, however, largely on paper. As noted earlier, for example, even as the Republican Constitution directs gender balancing in appointments, Zambia's Cabinet is mostly men. The president also nominated more male Members of Parliament (six compared to two for females).

Public officials undermining laws challenge NGOCC, MOs to proactively address the constraints to real empowerment and advancement of the rights of women and girls. Key to understanding NGOCC's influence is a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Analysis. The following SWOT shows, overall, that NGOCC is a credible brand. The NGOCC Secretariat, however, needs to resolve some key operational issues with its MOs.

## CONTEXT OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan identifies the challenges and opportunities for the coming five years. The SWOT Analysis peers into NGOCC's collective competencies and vast experience on empowerment initiatives while recognising the emergent challenges and informed by findings of various reviews such as the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 2018-2022 strategy. The SWOT also incorporates the findings of the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) undertaken by the European Union (EU) in November 2018 and in June 2022. Additionally, the SWOT considers the role of key stakeholders along with their power, interests, and the influence they will have on NGOCC's strategic plan implementation.

This analysis is key in ensuring that the 2023-2027 strategy is positioned to chart a more robust path for the empowerment of women and girls. The MTR's findings highlight some key concerns about NGOCC's substantive programming approach. It observed that while the ending strategy addressed priorities linked to the situation and conditions of women, it did not sufficiently tackle the root causes of women not enjoying their human rights. In other words, the strategy lacked a gender transformative approach.

The MTR backs this observation by noting the minimal impact of the strategy on assisting women and girls to fully confront and overturn sociocultural factors that infringe on their human rights. For example, the MTR noted that the strategy provided little evidence on the extent to which young women have gained more influence on decisions regarding their sexuality and bodies.

The reviews further noted too that although the strategy worked to improve demand and access to sexual health and reproductive services by young women and men involving peer educators and key community actors and leaders, there was need to intensify advocacy efforts on addressing the supply side constraints.

On the aspect of business development, the reviews noted the insufficient level of upskilling on financial literacy and business insight and skills to take advantage of market and business opportunities for women and girls to realise their economic potential. Additionally, the reviews noted that efforts to promote women's political leadership were centered on supporting female candidature in the 2021 elections and on qualifying women in terms of literacy and re-entry to school as a long-term vision that addresses a systemic barrier for such participation.

The MTR did also provide positive assessments of the 2018-2022 strategic plan's impact noting that sensitisation work on women's political participation had generated more interest in women pursuing opportunities to qualify by re-entering school. The MTR noted, however, that there was need for more sustainable, long-term and continuous efforts for support towards women in the election campaigns.

The MTR further noted some success in the efforts to end child marriage, but that there was room for improvement in the continuity of engaging parents and key community actors to drive the agenda in a more sustained manner. Additionally, more women owned land (even though the numbers were not that large), better positioning them to make decisions about the use of land.

The MTR highlighted the work around climate change adaptation and resilience as an important area of work for NGOCC. The review identified the need for NGOCC to make strategic alliances to facilitate dissemination of information on alternative energy sources and their use in local communities, while increasing knowledge about them.

Organisationally, the MTR highlighted some gains in the capacity of the Secretariat, noting the increased advocacy work in a combination of lead and delegated coordination among MOs with the progressive development towards having member organisations implement projects.

However, the MTR noted that progress on the institutional capacity of MOs was difficult to measure and MOs were not supported to consolidate growth of organisations despite efforts made to strengthen their governance. Further, the MTR observed that the short timeframe and modest size of sub-grants to MO's did not match the ambition and sustained efforts needed to make change happen at scale. Overall, the MTR noted improvements in how MOs engage in advocacy work and report on it.

NGOCC did contribute to MOs' increased knowledge particularly in the three key areas of social accountability, advocacy work, and project management through the basket fund.

The ROM review advised that NGOCC adopts an efficient prioritisation of focus-areas to maximise potential results. The ROM identified policy advocacy, influence on women's rights and the facilitation of the growth of MOs as the NGOCC Secretariat's core added value. The SOWT Analysis (Figure 2) summarises the key issues for NGOCC.

## NGOCC’S SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

NGOCC is a mature and reputable organisation with collective competencies, national footprint and vast experience represented in the work of its Secretariat and MOs on empowerment initiatives of women and girls (Figure 1 SWOT). NGOCC is well regarded by the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and its cooperating partners. The organization acts as a capacity building resource for its affiliate member organisations. NGOCC has sustained funding support showing a good faith effort to judicious programming and safeguarding of funds received. NGOCC owns property to back its organisational viability.

### Weaknesses

Despite NGOCC’s strong reputation, it remains traditional in its approach and has key challenges identified in reviews of the 2018-2022 strategic plan. Significant among them is the issue of not clearly addressing a human rights approach for women’s and girls’ empowerment. Organisationally NGOCC needs to improve its M&E. NGOCC also needs to strengthen coordination at provincial levels. Further, NGOCC needs to break its high dependency on external funding. as the 2015 withdrawal of Norwegian showed.

### Opportunities

A key opportunity relates to building on NGOCC’s reputation as a focal point for women’s issues in Zambia and a voice for the women’s movement to move towards more complex and rights-based approaches. NGOCC can leverage this opportunity to further advance women’s and girls’ empowerment as a key national agenda from a rights and environmental perspective. Even as pandemics remain a threat to organisations, NGOCC has adapted well and coped with the COVID-19 challenge, for example, by utilising ICT resources to continue its operations.

### Threats

For threats, how NGOCC continues to adapt given the changing operational environment, is key. NGOCC must assure its donors that it is well established in its cause and will grow even further. Another important threat is that set laws and policies are ignored for gender. Further, that the GRZ disbanded the Ministry of Gender in favour of a Gender Division is concerning. Even though the change from PF to UPND reign has improved civic life, women and girls still face serious security concerns. Women remain marginalized from key leadership positions.

Figure 2: NGOCC’ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis



## 5.0 THEORY OF CHANGE – 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

### NGOCC'S CHANGE IMPERATIVE

The NGOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Plan's Theory of Change (TOC) describes in summary the pathways the organization will take towards achievement of the strategic goal for the five-year strategic period. It provides in summary the key components of the results chain towards the envisaged impact.

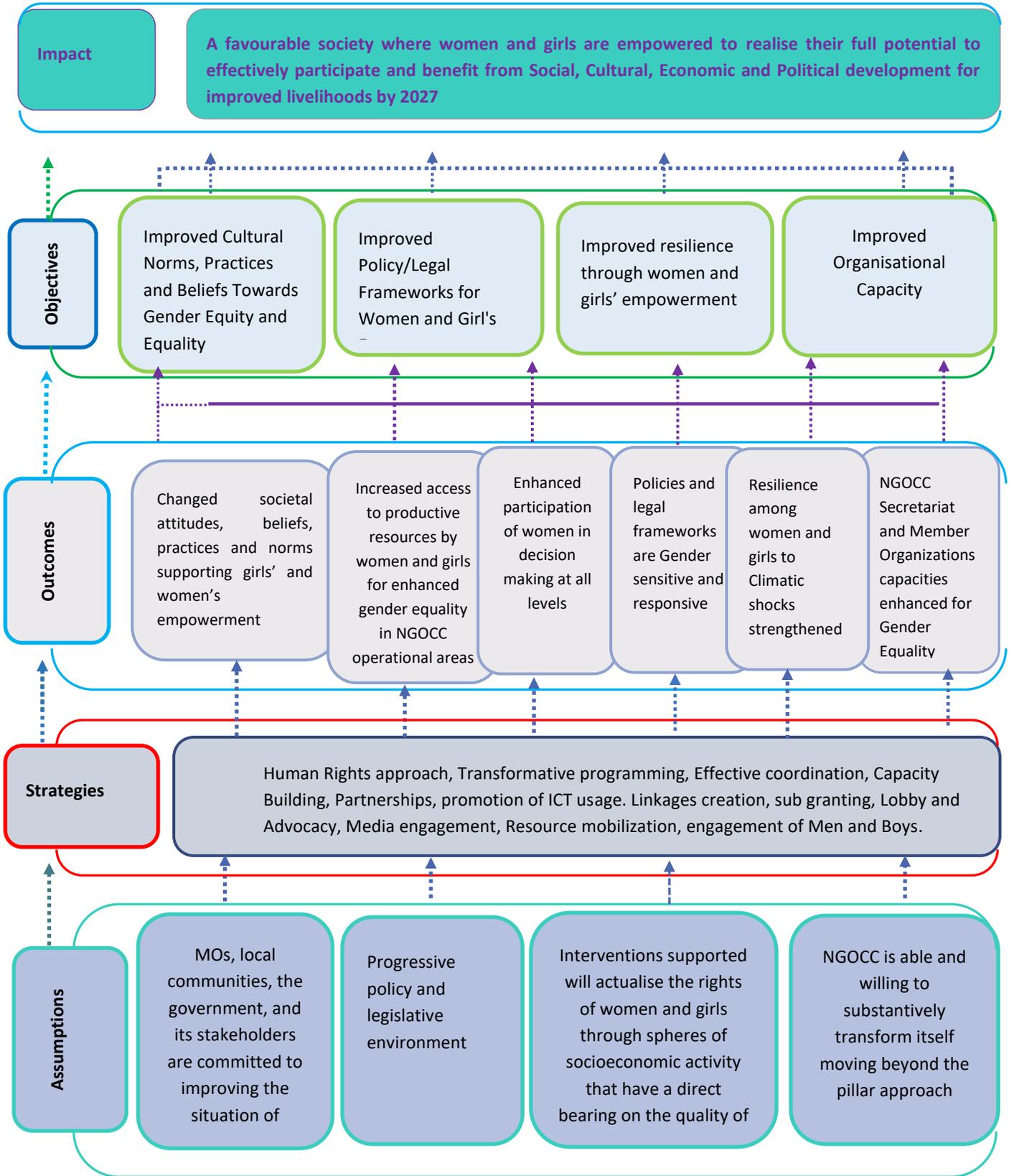
The operational and situational context highlighted earlier give impetus to the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan's Theory of Change (TOC). The key areas for change include adopting a gender transformative approach focusing on human rights. Further, climate change concerns are addressed in the strategic thinking on women's and girls' empowerment. The need to refine the strategic approach also derives from the evaluation findings that determined that NGOCC needs to improve its programming and intervention models.

Zambia's broader developmental context characterized by the negative impact of COVID-19 and political change also inform the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan TOC (Figure 3). Key, even with improvements in civic life, is the need to guard against losing the progress gained in the course of the previous strategy. There are still critical challenges with actualising legislation and policies that are supposed to support the empowerment of women. and girls.

Organisationally, the TOC positions NGOCC to sharpen its advocacy role especially targeting supply side constraints and, further, ensure that MOs and other CSO's are capable collaborators. The ROM review also advised that NGOCC adopts an efficient prioritisation of focus areas to maximise potential results. The ROM identified policy advocacy and influence on women's rights and facilitation of growth of MOs as the NGOCC Secretariat's core interests.

Calling for improved targeting and results harvesting and use for decision making, the ROM advised NGOCC to address the diversity of marginalised women's groups to avoid unintentional exclusion. The ROM recommended that vulnerability assessments within beneficiary communities in collaboration with MOs be conducted for holistic targeting. Overall, feedback on the ending strategy recommends that NGOCC develops M&E capabilities in the Secretariat and among MOs.

**Figure 3: Theory of Change 2023-2027 Strategic Plan**



## 6.0 TRANSLATING TOC INTO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 6.1 OVERVIEW

NGOCC is at a turning point as it embraces a new chapter with the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The key challenge for NGOCC is to recommit to serving populations of disempowered women and girls by reconfiguring to integrate a focus on human rights while addressing the exigencies of a rapidly evolving operational environment that includes increasing concerns about climate change among other challenges.

In implementing the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, NGOCC shifts from a pillar approach to focus on an integrated approach to reaching underserved women and girls. A clearly delineated results framework (Figure 4) with objective areas, activities and performance measures to focus programming and clearly track results will guide programming.

Accordingly, Figure 4 Below is an effort to delineate objective areas with the development hypothesis that:

*NGOCC works to deliver social, economic, cultural and political commitments on women's and girls' empowerment. The divergent stakeholders secretariat and MOs collaboratively influence communities, the GRZ and its partners to achieve creative solutions to issues of women's empowerment, providing more reliable opportunities for the equitable inclusion of women across the development spectrum.*

As outlined in Figure 4, NGOCC' four strategic objectives (SOs) include:

#### **SO1: Improved Cultural Norms, Practices and Beliefs Towards Gender Equity and Equality**

SO1 seeks address the entrenched cultural norms, practices and societal beliefs that perpetuate gender gaps. Strategically, SO1 tackles the issues of human rights and ensuring that intervention areas lead to transformative gender outcomes especially with regard to negative sociocultural norms that undermine empowerment of women and girls. SO1 includes a climate change focus, helping communities to transition to environmentally friendly livelihoods.

#### **SO2: Improved Policy/Legal Frameworks for Women and Girl's Empowerment**

SO2 targets the policy and legal framework aiming to consolidate the progress made so far and to ensure effective implementation. SO2 focuses on improving the holistic policy and legal environment while safeguarding the progress made so far to mitigate erosion of women's and girls' rights and access to and participation in development opportunities. SO2 includes a climate change focus targeting to influence climate related policies and legislation that positively impact marginalised women and girls.

#### **SO3: Improved Resilience Through Women and Girls' Empowerment**

SO3 targets empowerment of women and girls with a focus on resilience. SO3 is aimed at addressing issues of resilience by adapting programming to address threats that women and girls face. This includes ensuring pandemics such as COVID-19 would not have a less severe impact on women and girls in future. SO3 includes a climate change focus that targets collaborations with organisations that have expertise in environmental programming.

#### **SO4: Improved Organisational Capacity**

SO4 aims at building the collective competencies of the NGOCC Secretariat and the MOs. SO4 focuses on strengthening performance to build upon NGOCC's reputation and enhance its capacity and resilience to reach the most underserved populations. This objective is especially responsive to the feedback given by various reviews of the ending strategy. Under SO4, NGOCC will cohere programming approaches to achieve integration across the four objective areas. Overall, SO4 is about NGOCC's organisational development that is pivotal to actualising its leadership role in advancing empowerment of women and girls.

## 7.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The results framework (Figure 4) below lays out the programme activities under the strategic plan of each objective area.

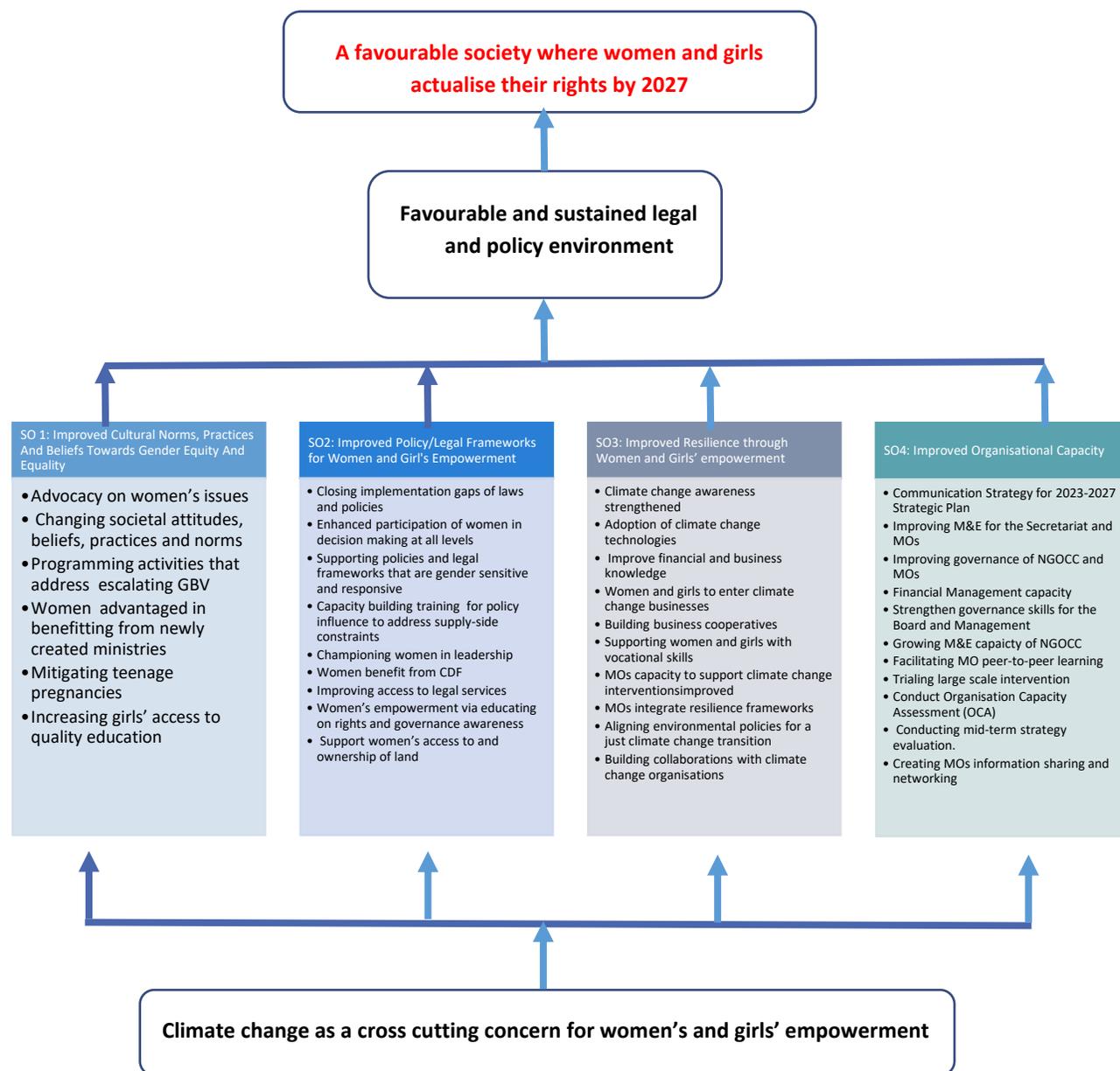


Figure 4: NGOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Objectives

## 7.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 (SO1): IMPROVED CULTURAL NORMS, PRACTICES AND BELIEFS TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY

SO1 covers NGOCC's overriding mandate as an advocacy organisation for empowerment of women and girls. A key focus under this objective over the strategy period is to ensure that programming work responds to a dynamically changing sociopolitical and cultural environment. SO1 recognises the need to address women's and girls' lack of access to power due to sociocultural barriers in the quest to reduce gaps.

This objective also recognises the threat of escalating gender-based violence (GBV) and insecurity against a context of rising criminality, including trafficking of women and moral decay. In 2020, as schools closed due to COVID-19, over 16,500 schoolgirls got pregnant. Ultimately, NGOCC's reasoning is that the positive transformation of cultural norms, practices and beliefs towards gender equity and equality, will improve the rights of women and girls.

SO1's focus on rights entails the need for power transforming interventions that compel societal gatekeepers to pave way for women and girls to play their roles and ensure equal participation of women and men in the various development processes. Overall, this objective tackles social justice issues to ensure that the poorest women and girls have access to sociopolitical power, financial resources as well as technology that reduces burdens on livelihoods in coping with climate change impacts.

SO 1 has the following illustrative activities:

- a. Support activities that reignite passion for advocacy of women's issues that now face a conformist political space in terms of activism;
- b. Advocate for changed societal attitudes, beliefs, practices and norms for increased support to girls and women's empowerment.
- c. Undertake programming activities that address escalating GBV;
- d. Support women's empowerment via educating on rights and governance awareness participation from household levels;
- e. Support women's access to and ownership of land;
- f. Support women's' access to and benefit from newly created ministries and Constituency Development Funds (CDF); and

- g. Improve access to climate change technologies that unburden the livelihoods of marginalised women and girls.

### PERFORMANCE GOALS

Success for SO1 will be reflected in the overall positive shift in societal norms, practices and beliefs towards gender equity and equality among the most marginalised populations. SO1 has the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- a. Number of MOs successfully implementing women's and girls' empowerment interventions that secure rights;
- b. Percentage of women with land social contracts;
- c. Number of women and girls accessing government funding through various opportunities such as the CDF;
- d. Number of women and girls accessing technologies that reduce the burden of climate impacts;
- e. Percentage of women in decision making positions;
- f. Percentage of women contesting leadership positions; and
- g. Percentage of women translating rights knowledge to secure livelihoods

### KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The assumption for the success of SO1 is that MOs, local communities, the government and other strategic stakeholders are committed to improving the situation of women and girls. Another assumption is that key stakeholders are committed to exploring and sustaining innovations that creatively foster a sociopolitical environment that enables attainment of desired objectives.

SO1 strategically departs from 'business-as-usual-approaches' that treat women and girls as a homogenous group. SO1 will also aim to contextualise approaches and progressively move to experimenting with taking interventions to scale as many activities are typically too micro level to be transformative.

## 7.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVED POLICY/LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR WOMEN AND GIRL'S EMPOWERMENT

Sustaining robust interest in the empowerment of women and girls that survives successive regime changes remains an important challenge for NGOCC's work. SO2 aims at ensuring that political commitments by the current and successive ruling governments, in terms of the policy and legal frameworks, remain favorable to enable consolidation of the progress made so far in women's and girls' empowerment and ensure effective implementation.

The fact that women remain marginal players at all levels of decision making, is a worrying indicator of the lack of substantive progress in the advancement of women's and girls' rights. Further, questions remain over the perennial changes of the national gender machinery with the latest being the current government's decision to disband the Ministry of Gender, favoring instead the setting up of a Gender Division in Cabinet Office in a country that still culturally venerates men and tolerates violence against women.

As such, SO2 focuses on escalating advocacy work with the aim of improving the holistic policy and legal environment while safeguarding the progress made so far to mitigate erosion of women's and girl's rights. This objective also includes a climate change focus targeting to influence climate related policies and legislation to positively impact marginalised women and girls.

Overall, this objective will ensure that over the strategy period, the existence and implementation of policy and legal frameworks for women and girl's empowerment leads to inclusion, participation, and an increase in the rights and resilience of women and girls despite a shifting political landscape.

SO2 has the following illustrative activities:

- a. Access to productive resources by women and girls for enhanced gender equality in NGOCC operational areas;
- b. Closing implementation gaps of laws and policies;
- c. Enhanced participation of women in decision making at all levels;
- d. Supporting policies and legal frameworks that are gender sensitive and responsive;
- e. Creating MOs information sharing and networking for capacity development;

- f. Training to build capacity for policy influence to address supply-side constraints.
- h. Championing women in leadership; and
- i. Aligning environmental policies for a just climate change transition by women and girls

### Performance Goals

Success for SO2 will be reflected in the overall improvement in how NGOCC is able to conduct policy influence. This objective has the following Key Performance Indicators:

- Improved policy and legal framework to support the full participation of women in developmental spheres.
- A legally provided for and protected national gender machinery.
- Full implementation of the existing progressive policies and legal provisions.
- Aligned environmental policies for a just climate change transition.

### Key Assumptions

Success of SO2 assumes a progressive policy and legislative environment. It envisages that NGOCC will secure the cooperation and support of its stakeholders to achieve programming under SO2. Women's empowerment, inclusion and participation in governance at all levels can effectively be achieved through legal provisions guaranteed by good policies and laws that do not depend on judgement of good people.

### 7.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVED RESILIENCE THROUGH WOMEN AND GIRLS AGAINST EMPOWERMENT

Calamities of various nature including conflicts, pandemics, famine, drought, floods and climate impacts all cause great suffering undermining the empowerment of women and girls. Strategic Objective three (SO3) targets resilience in its empowerment of women and girls with a focus on social justice.

For example, the last Climate Change United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the Zambian Government made the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% based on 2010 levels by 2030. This commitment must come with corresponding interventions for a just transition to an environmentally cleaner society. SO3 is aimed at addressing issues of resilience by adapting programming to address threats in the socioeconomic conditions that women and girls face.

This includes ensuring pandemics such as COVID-19 would not have a devastating impact on women and girls in future. Women and girls must have unfettered access to a good education and health services despite crises. The climate change focus under SO3 also targets to ensure that emergent policies and legal frameworks on climate change enable women and girls' empowerment through inclusion and participation, to enhance their resilience against environmental shocks for sustainable development.

SO3 has the following illustrative activities:

- a. Climate change awareness strengthened to support resilience among women and girls to climatic shocks.
- b. Adoption of climate change technologies.
- c. Supporting women and girls to enter climate change businesses.
- d. Building business cooperatives for women including in export sectors to scale economic growth and minimise exposure to economic shocks.
- e. Supporting women and girls with vocational skills.
- f. Mitigating teenage pregnancies through access to reproductive health information and services.
- g. Increasing girls' access to quality education;

- j. Building the capacity of MOs to support climate interventions;
- k. Supporting women's and girls' access to local resources such as CDF;
- l. Supporting climate change technology transfer;
- m. Building the capacity of MOs to integrate resilience frameworks in programming;
- n. Improve financial and business knowledge and application for livelihood; and
- o. Supporting a just climate change transition by women and girls

#### Performance Goals

Success for SO3 will be reflected in the overall improvement in how NGOCC empowers women and girls to address climate change and other calamities such as COVID-19. SO3 has the following KPIs:

- a. The integration of the resilience framework in programming to supporting climate change interventions.
- b. Adoption of climate smart technologies by women
- c. Women and girls exploring climate change entrepreneurial opportunities.
- d. Enhanced capacities of MOs to support and implement climate change interventions.
- e. Enhanced collaborations with other organisations with expertise in climate change mitigation.

#### Key Assumptions

The assumption here is that the interventions supported will actualise the rights of women and girls through personal socioeconomic development that with a direct positive impact on their quality of life. Another assumption is that NGOCC's efforts to collaborate with other stakeholders especially on climate change issues will materialize and will be effective. Thirdly, SO3 assumes that NGOCCs work with strategic partners will mobilise resources for effective low-cost solutions.

#### 7.4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

NGOCC will turn 40 years in 2025 having been in existence since 1985. The organisation is confronted with the challenge of remaining relevant in a rapidly evolving operational context. Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) therefore focuses on strengthening organisational performance to build upon NGOCC's reputation and enhance its capacity and resilience to reach the most underserved populations.

NGOCC will cohere programming to achieve integration across the four SOs and their activities. NGOCC's ongoing organisational development is pivotal to actualising its leadership role in advancing the interests of women and girls.

This objective aims at building the collective competencies of NGOCC and MOs. It is especially responsive to the feedback given by various reviews of the ending strategy. Further, SO4 aims to actualise the interest of SO1, that is to reignite the passion for advocacy of women's and girls' empowerment through stronger collaborations between MOs and other stakeholders.

Areas for stronger collaboration include MO peer-to-peer learning and jointly amplifying the advocacy voice and its communication. This objective includes a climate change focus that targets building collaboration with organisations that have expertise in environmental programming.

SO4 key activity areas include:

- a. Developing a network wide communication strategy for the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan;
- b. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for NGOCC Secretariat and MOs;
- c. Enhancing governance capacity for NGOCC and MOs;
- d. Enhancing MOs capacity in Financial management;
- e. Fundraising for basket funding;
- f. Building collaborative partnerships with climate change organisations;
- g. Facilitating MO peer-to-peer learning and collaboration;
- h. Trialing large scale interventions with select MOs; and
- i. Conduct Organisation Capacity Assessment (OCA.)
- j. Conducting mid-term evaluation.

#### Performance Goals

Success for SO4 is reflected in the overall improvement in how NGOCC and MOs perform as a collective in supporting women's and girls' empowerment interventions. The objective has the following KPIs:

- a. Improved M&E for the Secretariat and MOs;
- b. Improved governance of NGOCC and MOs;
- c. Communication Strategy for 2023-2027 Strategic Plan developed and implemented.
- d. Percentage growth in basket funding mechanism;
- e. Number of unqualified Audits;
- f. Enhanced corporate governance skills for the Board of Governors and Secretariate Management staff;
- g. Number of MOs graduating from basket funding need; and
- h. Diversified resource base of the Secretariat and MOs

#### Key Assumptions

Success of SO4 assumes that NGOCC is able and willing to substantively transform itself moving beyond the pillar approach to more integrated programming. SO4 also assumes a progressive strategic plan buy-in by its MOs. Furthermore, the success for this strategic objective is contingent on NGOCC cementing a collective identity and voice as women and girls confront new challenges.

Overall, the assumption is that the existence of a well-coordinated, resourced and effective NGOCC Secretariat and MOs will contribute towards women's empowerment for gender equity and equality and move Zambia towards a society where women are empowered and fully participate in social, cultural, economic and political development hence reducing the gender divide.

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## 7.5 CLIMATE CHANGE AS A CROSS CUTTING OPPORTUNITY

NGOCC has supported emergent climate change interventions that include the use of low wood fuel braziers. As the whole world is pivoting the use of technology in response to climate change, it is important to embrace the notion of climate justice to ensure response strategies adopted fairly support livelihoods of marginalised populations.

Globally, countries, including the most developed, are struggling to move decisively on climate change. NGOCC targets empowerment of women and girls with a focus on resilience. NGOCC's climate response is aimed at addressing issues of resilience by adapting programming to address threats in the socioeconomic conditions that women and girls face.

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## 7.6 COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

While NGOCC's overall mandate is inclusive in affording all women and girls the opportunity to become empowered, it is recognised that even among this group, it is important to address their unique circumstances and barriers to socioeconomic well-being. The advent of pandemics such as COVID-19 especially push already marginalised communities over the edge by for example, completely excluding people with disabilities.

Consequently, NGOCC is committed to achieving inclusion by the strategic quest to reach the most underserved populations. Near and far, NGOCC will work on isolating the conditions that exacerbate exclusion and provide empowerment opportunities for vulnerable populations and in particular people with disabilities.

## 6.8 Underpinning Strategies

Several strategies will form the bedrock of the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

- a) A Human Rights Approach
- b) Transformative programming
- c) Continuous engagement of Men and Boys networks
- d) Effective coordination
- e) Building Collaborative Partnerships
- f) Promoting the use of ICT.
- g) Creating Linkages
- h) Sub granting
- i) Engaging the media
- j) Identifying and leveraging Champions for key messaging

## 8.0 INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

The indicator framework below lays out the KPIs under the strategic plan of each objective area:

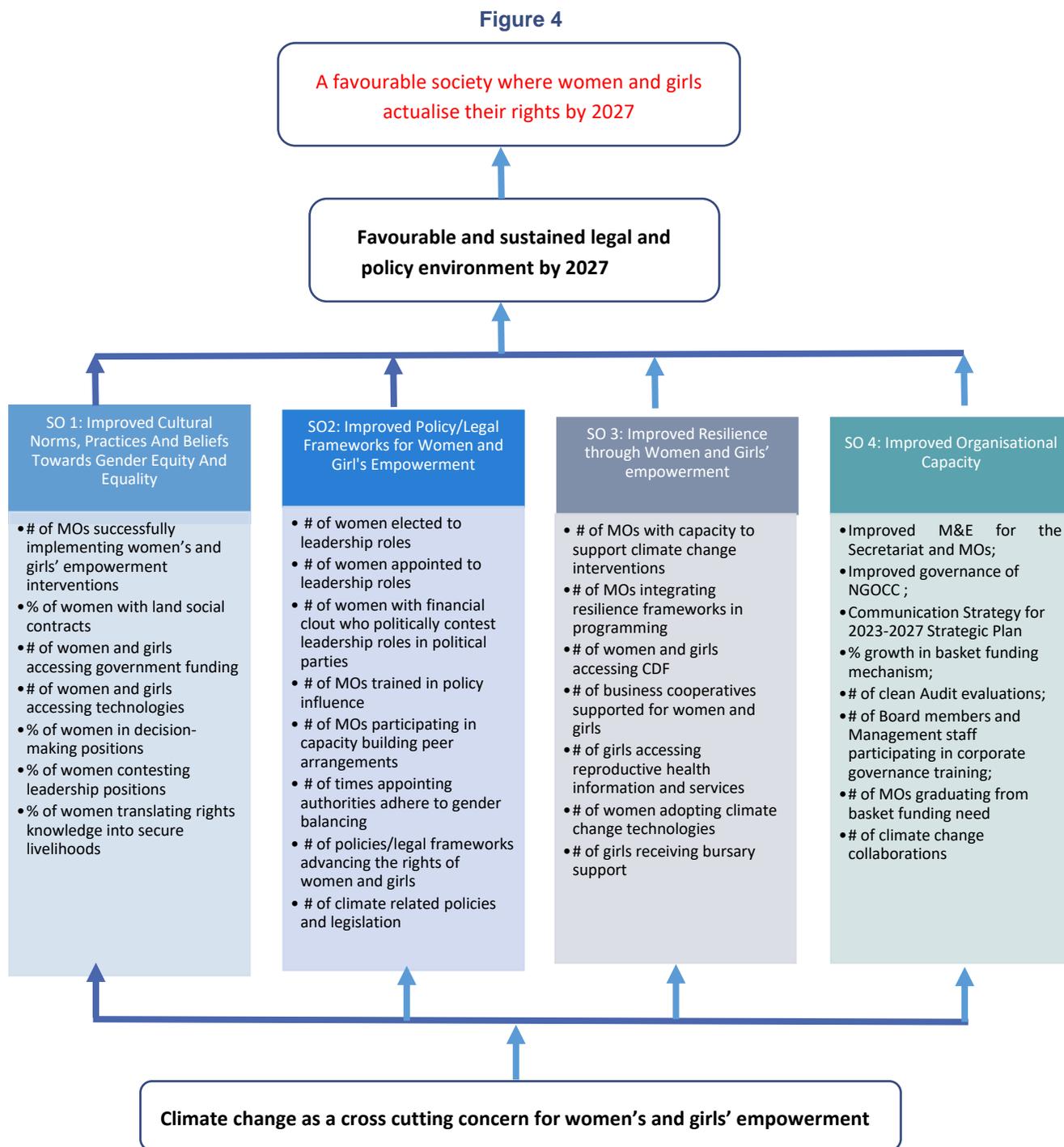


Figure 1: NGOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Indicator Framework

## 9.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)

### 9.1 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

NGOCC's M&E Unit will oversee and coordinate the Strategic Plan's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) effort. The M&E team will develop a variety of methods to gather evidence for the work done under each of the four strategic objectives as outlined in the indicator and results frameworks (Figure 3).

Imperative for the MEL effort is a purposeful and cost-effective collection of credible information to enable timely and ongoing decision making in performance management under the strategic plan. The overall thrust of the MEL effort is to convey a balanced account of resource investments and results achieved across the four focus areas.

NGOCC will develop quantitative and qualitative baselines for the KPIs under each SO using different methods and sources to evidence progress towards achieving the impact goal of **A favourable society where women and girls actualise their rights by 2027**. For example, as SO1 is focused on NGOCC's advocacy mandate, the M&E section will use surveys, feedback from MOs and local communities, and research to determine baselines and future outcomes.

NGOCC will also conduct a midterm evaluation of the strategic plan with a view to making adjustments to align it with obtaining conditions and programming interests.

## 10.0 STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET

The successful implement of the NGOCC 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan will require a total of ZMW 205,913,080 over the strategy period. The Strategic Plan Budget, which is an Activity Based Budget, has been informed by the activities that are planned for towards the achievement of the stated objectives and goal over the five-year period. The 2023 annual budget figure has been used as the base year, where possible, rolled over into the coming years, but subjected to an inflation charge of 5 % per annum. The activities around the basket fund are included in all the four objectives of the Strategic Plan indicating the contribution of the grant funds to the achievement of each strategic area.

2023 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES		TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET					TOTAL STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	ZMW
<b>Objective 1</b>	Improved Cultural Norms, Practices and Beliefs Towards Gender	6,790,814	7,130,355	7,486,872	7,861,216	8,254,277	37,523,534
<b>Objective 2</b>	Improved Policy/Legal Frameworks for Women and Girl's	5,862,406	6,155,526	6,463,303	6,786,468	7,125,791	32,393,494

<b>Objective 3</b>	Improved resilience through women and girls' empowerment	3,761,307	3,949,372	4,146,841	4,354,183	4,571,892	20,783,596
<b>Objective 4</b>	Improved Organisational Capacity	21,299,838	22,364,830	22,695,571	23,830,350	25,021,867	115,212,457
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>37,714,365</b>	<b>39,600,083</b>	<b>40,792,587</b>	<b>42,832,217</b>	<b>44,973,828</b>	<b>205,913,080</b>