Zimbabwe
Combined Agenda 2063 scenario

Jakkie Cilliers
The Combined Agenda 2063 scenario consists of the combination of all 11 sectoral scenarios presented above, namely the Stability, Demographic, Health/WaSH, Agriculture, Education, Manufacturing/Transfers, Leapfrogging, Free Trade, Financial Flows, Infrastructure and Governance scenarios. The cumulative impact of better education, health, infrastructure, etc., means that countries get an additional benefit in the integrated IFs forecasting platform that we refer to as the synergistic effect. Chart 55 presents the contribution of each of these 12 components to GDP per capita in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario as a stacked area graph.

Each scenario explored thus far impacts average incomes in Zimbabwe to different degrees. Of all of the scenarios, Free Trade increases GDP per capita the most dramatically, raising average incomes by approximately US$500 in 2043. In the Stability scenario, incomes also grow substantially more quickly than on the Current Path.

As is to be expected, the aggregate impact of all the scenarios together is dramatically greater than each of the scenarios individually. Additionally, the synergistic effect of the combined scenarios is projected to add an additional US$112 to the average Zimbabwean’s income in 2035 and US$470 in 2043. This finding speaks to the beneficial effect of concerted, cross-cutting government approaches to seemingly intractable problems such as extreme poverty.
Whereas Chart 55 presents a stacked area graph on the contribution of each scenario to GDP per capita as well as the additional benefit or synergistic effect, Chart 56 presents only the GDP per capita in the Current Path forecast and the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario.

Average incomes increase dramatically in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, whereas they grow fairly slowly on the Current Path. In the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, average incomes in Zimbabwe increase to US$3,358 by 2030, representing an improvement of more than US$300 over the Current Path forecast for that year.

By 2043, average incomes reach US$7,397 — a 66% increase over the Current Path forecast for that year.

Such a dramatic improvement in average incomes in Zimbabwe would transform livelihoods and the quality of life of people across the country.
Roughly two out of five Zimbabweans (6.7 million people) lived on less than US$3.20, the extreme poverty line for lower middle-income countries, in 2019. Although this poverty rate of nearly 45% is projected to decline to 20% by 2043, 4.7 million Zimbabweans will be living in extreme poverty by 2040 on the Current Path.

Conversely, poverty reduces dramatically in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, evidencing the profound impact of cross-sectoral, whole-of-government solutions to problems as complex as poverty. In the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, Zimbabwe's poverty rate falls below 3% by the early-2040s. From a different perspective — there would be more than 4 million fewer Zimbabweans living in poverty in 2043 in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario combined to the Current Path forecast.
See Chart 8 to view the Current Path forecast of the sectoral composition of the economy.

The value added of the sectors of Zimbabwe’s economy varies between the Current Path and the Combined Agenda 2063 scenarios. The two primary methods of measuring differences in sectors’ contribution to GDP are in 1) percentage points and 2) absolute value (dollars).

From the perspective of percentage points, agriculture experiences the greatest increase over the medium term, while services jumps substantially by over four percentage points over the forecast horizon. In absolute terms, services experience the greatest increase, contributing an additional US$31 billion in 2043 to the Zimbabwean economy compared to the Current Path. Conversely, the contributions of the energy, manufactures, and materials sectors in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario decline over the forecast horizon when compared to the Current Path.

In absolute terms, all sectors increase in size in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario compared to the Current Path.
After a series of prolonged economic crises, the Zimbabwean economy slowly recovered to an estimated US$19.4 billion in size in 2019 and is projected to reach US$57.3 billion by 2043. The Combined Agenda 2063 scenario paints a far more optimistic future: by 2030, GDP would be US$4 billion greater than the Current Path forecast for that year; by 2043, approximately US$50 billion greater. At that accelerated rate, Zimbabwe's economy would overtake Zambia's Current Path forecast by the early 2040s.
In 2019, Zimbabwe was the 13th largest carbon emitter in Africa, although its economy was only the 25th largest, reflecting its dependence on coal for much of its electricity generation and a carbon-inefficient economy.

On its current trajectory, Zimbabwe’s carbon emissions will more than double from the 2019 estimate of 4 million tons to 10 million tons in 2043. In the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, carbon emissions reach 14 million tons by 2043, marking a dramatic 40% increase over the Current Path forecast for that year and 350% increase over the 2019 estimate. While the improved economic activity and performance modelled in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario would bring about significant improvements in the livelihoods of most Zimbabweans, their impact on carbon emissions must be considered. That said, Zimbabwe’s emissions, even in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario, remain a mere fraction of more developed countries. Neighbouring South Africa, for example, produced an estimated 135 million tons of carbon emissions in 2019. These disparities raise critical questions around environmental inequality and the responsibility of highly industrialised nations to compensate less developed countries for the devastating impacts of climate change.
Donors and sponsors

Reuse our work

- All visualizations, data, and text produced by African Futures are completely open access under the Creative Commons BY license. You have the permission to use, distribute, and reproduce these in any medium, provided the source and authors are credited.

- The data produced by third parties and made available by African Futures is subject to the license terms from the original third-party authors. We will always indicate the original source of the data in our documentation, so you should always check the license of any such third-party data before use and redistribution.

- All of our charts can be embedded in any site.

Cite this research

About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director of the ISS. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the ISS. His 2017 best-seller Fate of the Nation addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution (March 2020), The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities (April 2021), and Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.