



## Unlocking systemic bottlenecks for sustainable family planning commodity security in Malawi and Zambia

### Significance and background

Across low and middle income countries (LMICs), women and girls are unable to access the sexual and reproductive health (SRH)/ family planning (FP) commodities they need (Ninsiima, 2021). This is partly due to a lack of steady and predictable supply of FP commodities despite available funds for this purpose.

Unavailability of FP commodities negatively affects the achievement of FP goals such as, 'no parenthood before adulthood'. Thus, it is imperative that governments, donors, and decision-makers collaborate to improve FP commodity security.

#### Reasons for poor supply and distribution of FP commodities

Delay in procurement process	Inadequate skills in handling logistics management information system	FP commodity stockout
Poor coordination between Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Health (MoH) & medical supplies agencies in processing procurement, payments and distribution of FP commodities.	Poor management and tracking of FP/ SRH commodities from procurement request, purchase, distribution and utilisation.	Challenges in the last mile distribution of FP/ SRH commodities which lead to stock outs at points of service delivery.

## Tested advocacy intervention



As part of the UK Aid-funded WISH2Action programme, civil society accountability mechanisms in Malawi and Zambia conducted political economy analyses, supply chain bottleneck analyses and budget performance analyses related to FP commodity financing. The findings were then used to identify key decision makers with interest and influence over FP commodity financing and supply, and to develop targeted advocacy strategies and messages. The teams collaborated with FP/SRH stakeholders including Ministries of Health, Ministry of Finance, parliamentarians, Government Officials and Development Partners to collaboratively propose actions and solutions to address the identified bottlenecks to FP commodity procurement and distribution.



Accountability mechanism in BMT session in Malawi



Bottleneck analysis for the last mile distribution of contraceptive commodities in Zambia

## Methodology

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Options WISH gathered additional data through document reviews at various levels of the health systems exploring interactions and relationships between health financing, supply chain and service delivery. They also did in-depth interviews with key informants from MoF, MoH and the medical supplies agencies in country. Finally Options WISH facilitated stakeholder workshops with MoH, MoF, development partners, CSOs and donors to discuss and validate the results of the reviews and jointly identify and recommend key solutions.

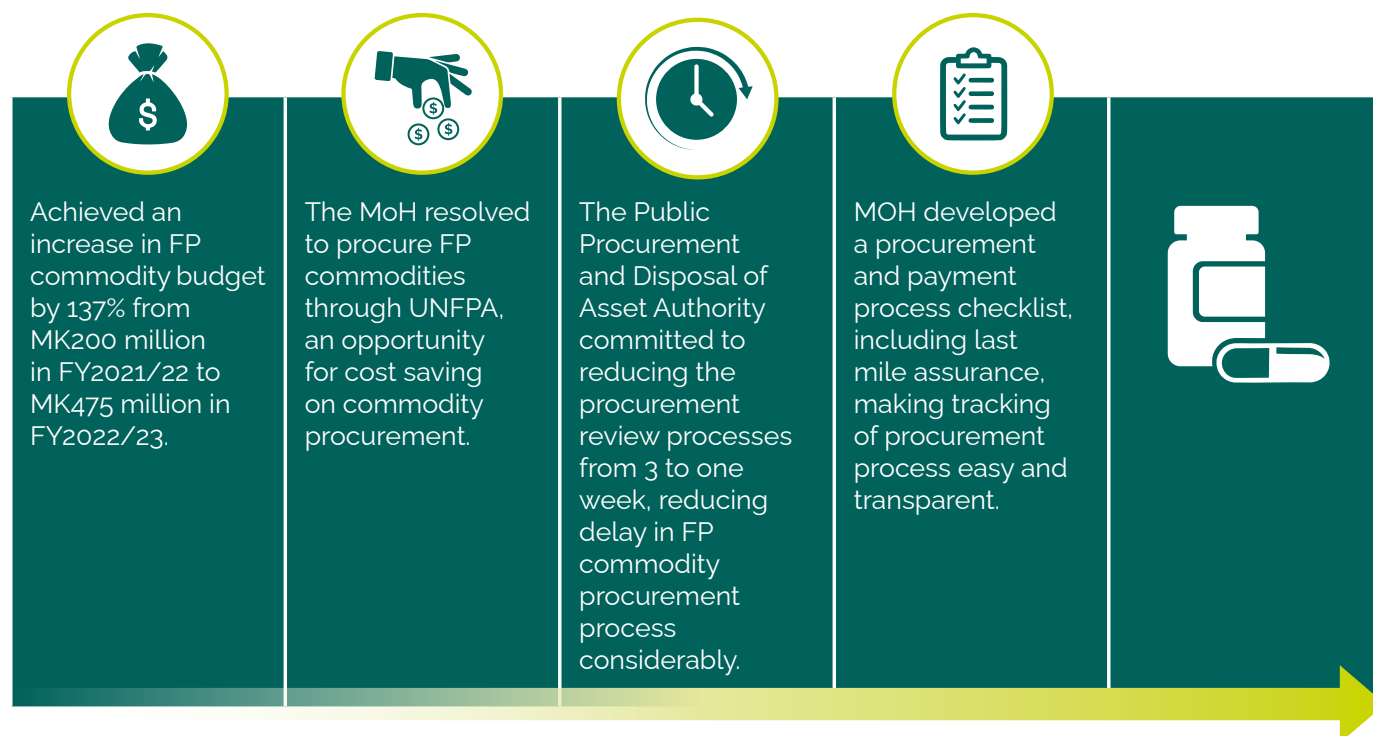
## Results

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The budget analyses showed that, although budgeted funds covered only a small proportion of total FP commodity costs, the funds that had been allocated for FP commodities were released in both Zambia and Malawi. However, spending and service targets were not achieved. The bottleneck analyses revealed weak public financial management and procurement processes. Multisectoral consultations recommended solutions to the weak procurement processes as well as FP commodity distribution to the last mile.

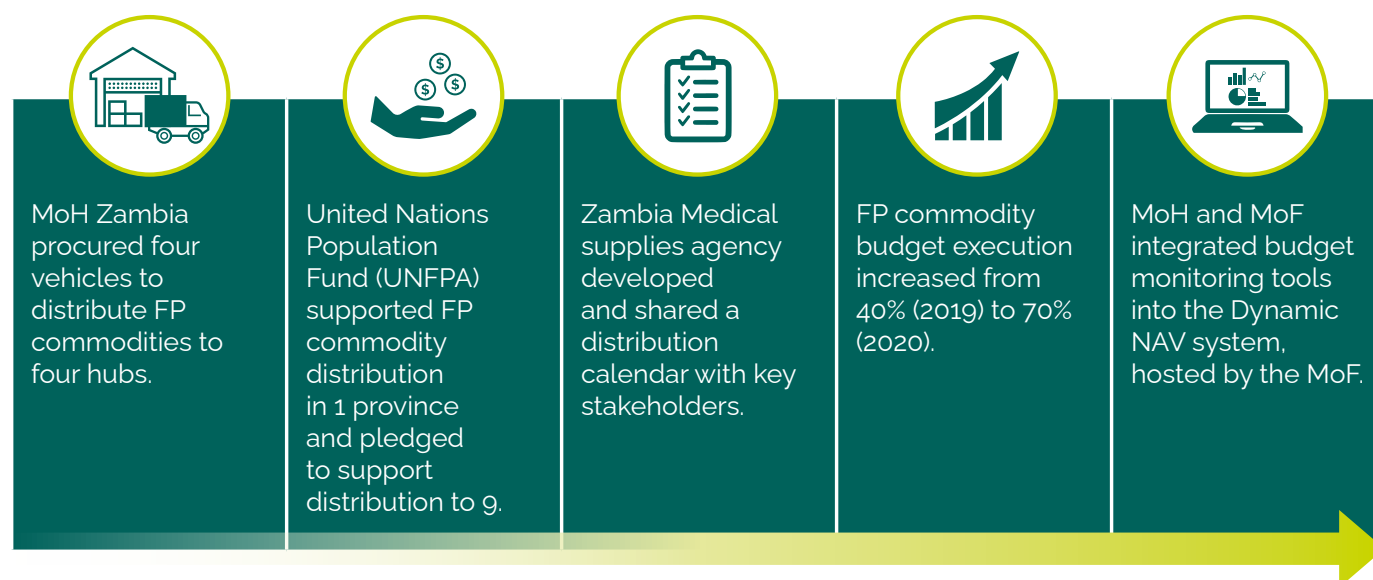
## Results for Malawi

Strengthening CSOs and government capacity to generate and utilize evidence for advocacy and decision-making yielded the following results.



## Results for Zambia

Through working with the accountability mechanism, we packaged evidence and used it to advocate for improved FP commodity distribution to the last mile.



## Policy implications

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Through working with the accountability mechanism, we packaged evidence and used it to advocate for improved FP commodity distribution to the last mile.



Addressing operational gaps in FP commodity procurement and distribution to the last mile is a big win in ensuring both availability of commodities and services.



In Malawi, the MoH policy decisions to procure FP commodities through the UNFPA allows for efficiency by leveraging global competitive pricing, leading to efficient utilization of domestic funds for FP commodities.



The MoH investing in vehicles to support last mile distribution of FP commodities in Zambia is a sustainable way to ensure stock outs are minimized and FP commodities are available at the service delivery points.

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