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New Deal for Zimbabwe's SMEs

President Mnangagwa declares small businesses the backbone of the economy, announcing reforms to spur investment, jobs and regional trade.

Alijones Masanjala

The government has placed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperatives at the heart of its economic transformation agenda, with President Emmerson Mnangagwa declaring the sector a principal pillar of the economy and challenging entrepreneurs to expand beyond local markets into regional and continental trade.

Addressing more than 1,500 delegates at the inaugural National MSMEs and Co-operatives Indaba in Harare on Thursday, President Mnangagwa said the sector, which contributes over 60 percent of Zimbabwe's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supports millions of livelihoods, is no longer operating on the margins of the economy but has become central to the country's drive towards Vision 2030.

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President Emmerson Mnangagwa displays the National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Cooperatives Blueprint alongside the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Senator Monica Mutsvangwa, during the inaugural National MSMEs and Cooperatives Indaba in Harare. Picture: InfoZW

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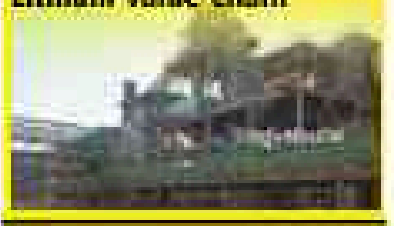

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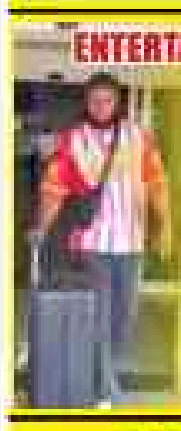

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Zimbabwe Opens New Governance Chapter

APRM review identifies progress in economic management while outlining reforms to strengthen transparency, fiscal discipline and investor confidence.

By Abel Karowangoro

President Emmerson Mnangagwa unveils the Zimbabwe APRM Targeted Review Report on Economic Governance and Management during a ceremony attended by government officials, diplomats, development partners and private sector representatives in Harare. Photo: APRM Continental Secretariat.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa has launched Zimbabwe's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Targeted Review Report on Economic Governance and Management, describing it as a major step towards strengthening governance, accountability and economic reforms as the country pursues its Vision 2030 development agenda.

Speaking at the official launch at the New Parliament Building in Harare last week, Mnangagwa said the report marked "an important landmark in Zimbabwe's journey under the African Peer Review Mechanism," adding that the APRM was "a uniquely African home-grown initiative that embodies Africa's commitment to mutual accountability, self-assessment as well as continuous improvement in governance and development."

The launch attracted more than 300 delegates from government, the African Union, diplomatic missions, development partners, academia, civil society, the private sector, traditional leaders and youth organisations.

President Mnangagwa said Zimbabwe's participation in the APRM since joining the mechanism in February 2020 reflected the country's commitment to transparency, accountability and peer learning, adding that the review process reinforced government's dedication to good governance, sustainable development and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

He said the government had already developed a National Programme of Action to implement recommendations contained in the report, saying, "We are determined to achieve equitable development that leaves no one and no place behind."

Representing the Chairperson of the APR Forum of Heads of State and Government, Uganda's Vice President, Major (Rtd) Jessica Alupo, urged African countries that have not yet joined the APRM to embrace the mechanism as a tool for strengthening governance and sustainable development. She also pledged Uganda's support for Zimbabwe in implementing the recommendations contained in its National Programme of Action.

Presenting the findings of the targeted review, former Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, Ambassador Aly El-Hefny, said Zimbabwe had made notable progress in strengthening economic governance through improved public financial management, stronger anti-corruption and anti-money laundering frameworks, greater fiscal transparency and reforms aimed at improving the investment climate.

He said the reforms had contributed to increased stakeholder participation, enhanced investor confidence and laid the foundation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

However, Ambassador El-Hefny said the review also identified several areas requiring further attention, including off-budget expenditures, rising public debt, delayed financial reporting, institutional capacity constraints, weak public sector integrity and limited participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups in governance processes.

APRM Panel Member responsible for Zimbabwe, Dr. Thelma Awori, commended the country for completing the targeted review within a relatively short period, describing the successful launch of the report as evidence of Zimbabwe's commitment to governance reforms and continental peer learning.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Professor Amon Murwira said the Second Republic remained committed to a governance agenda centred on inclusive development, poverty reduction and the principle of leaving no one and no place behind.

Speaking on behalf of the African Union Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals, Acting Director General of the African Minerals Development Centre, Claudine Sigam said Zimbabwe's abundant mineral resources, particularly lithium, presented significant opportunities for industrialisation, provided they were managed under sound governance systems that promote transparency, accountability and equitable distribution of benefits.

The APRM report concludes Zimbabwe's targeted review on Economic Governance and Management and ushers in the implementation phase, during which the government will be expected to translate the report's recommendations into policy reforms aimed at strengthening public institutions, improving economic management and promoting inclusive development.

The African Peer Review Mechanism is a voluntary African Union instrument that enables member states to assess governance, democracy, economic management and socio-economic development through peer review, with the objective of strengthening institutions, promoting accountability and supporting sustainable development across the continent.

New Deal for Zimbabwe's SMEs

From page 1

"A vibrant and thriving micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives sector remains essential for the attainment of Vision 2030 and the goals set out in the National Development Strategy 2. This sector is no longer peripheral to our economy; it is now one of the principal pillars," the President said.

He challenged entrepreneurs to move beyond survival businesses and position themselves as exporters and manufacturers capable of competing across Africa under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"As we move towards Vision 2030, I challenge the sector to now shift focus to enter new markets and develop niche products in emerging economic spaces, including technology-driven enterprises," he said.

The President said Government is investing heavily in roads, rail, border posts, energy infrastructure and modern trading facilities to create an environment where businesses can grow and access regional markets.

He also announced that the Government is strengthening access to affordable finance through the Financial Inclusion Strategy while reviewing laws governing SMEs and cooperatives to improve the ease of doing business.

In addition, Government is developing modern workspaces for traders and manufacturers through projects such as the redevelopment of Mbare Musika and the construction of new markets in Bulawayo, Gwanda, Masvingo, Gweru, Chirundu and Chivhu.

President Mnangagwa also called on local authorities to allocate land specifically for SME workspaces, industrial clusters, agro-processing facilities and cooperative business centres to accelerate enterprise growth.

Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Senator Monica Mutsvangwa, said the President's attendance at the inaugural Indaba reflected the Second Republic's commitment to empowering entrepreneurs.

"The presence of His Excellency is testament to the Second Republic's commitment to empowering MSMEs and recognising them as critical drivers of inclusive growth and sustainable development," she said.

Senator Mutsvangwa said the sector has become the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy, with men and women across the country contributing significantly to national development through agriculture, mining, manufacturing, retail and services.

She said Government has strengthened institutional support by deploying Business and Cooperative Development Officers in every district to promote entrepreneurship and cooperative development.

"Our economic transformation cannot be complete without SMEs and cooperatives," she said.

Looking ahead, Senator Mutsvangwa urged stakeholders to accelerate reforms aimed at improving access to finance, technology, markets and productive infrastructure while promoting digital transformation, entrepreneurship and stronger cooperative governance.

The Indaba attracted delegates from Government, the private sector, academia, development partners and international organisations, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the International Cooperative Alliance.

India was among the countries represented at the conference.

Speaking during the Indaba, Ms Mercy Epao, Joint Secretary in India's Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, described Zimbabwe as an important partner and praised the country's commitment to women empowerment.

"India has a large and vibrant MSME sector which is the second-largest contributor to our economy after agriculture. We employ around 398 million people in the sector, including 90 million in the formal economy," she said.

Ms Epao said she was particularly impressed by the number of women occupying leadership positions in Zimbabwe and expressed optimism that economic cooperation between the two countries would continue to grow.

The inaugural Indaba was held under the theme "Towards Vision 2030: Building an Enabling Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives Ecosystem", with discussions focusing on strengthening partnerships, promoting innovation, increasing access to finance and integrating SMEs into regional and global value chains.

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Police warn motorists against resisting arrest

Itai Mazire

Police have issued a stern warning to motorists against resisting arrest or obstructing justice, as investigators probe two devastating road accidents that claimed 16 lives in Chinhoyi and Buhera within 24 hours.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police cautioned that officers are legally empowered to impound vehicles involved in traffic violations and warned that any attempt to interfere with law enforcement will not be tolerated.

"It is legal or lawful for a police officer to impound vehicles found to be involved in traffic violations and related criminal acts to a secure place which in this case is a Police Station," said National Police Spokesperson Commissioner Paul Nyathi.

The warning came as police launched investigations into a fatal collision along the Harare-Chirundu Road near Chinhoyi Heroes Acre on 16 July 2026, where seven people perished after a Nissan AD Van and a Nissan NV350 commuter omnibus collided at the 109-kilometre peg. Ten other passengers sustained injuries in the crash.

"Drivers are strongly warned against resisting arrest, fighting Police Officers and defeating or obstructing the course of justice," he said.

He stressed: "Rather, it is incumbent for drivers to cooperate and contribute towards the effective maintenance of law and order in the country."

In a second tragedy that unfolded at Ruti Dam, Buhera, on 17th July 2026 at around 4:30 AM, nine congregants from Gutu died when a Nissan Cara van kombi plunged into the water. The driver had negligently stopped at the dam wall and used a stone instead of the handbrake to secure the vehicle while loading luggage for 12 church members travelling to a religious function in Buhera.

The Commissioner-General of Police extended his deepest condolences to the grieving families and wished the 10 injured passengers from the Chinhoyi crash a speedy recovery.

Investigations into both incidents are ongoing, with police promising to release further details in due course.

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A New Deal for Zimbabwe's SMEs Must Deliver Real Change

Zimbabwe's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have long been the silent engine of the country's economy. They employ millions, sustain households, and contribute more than 60 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. Yet for decades, many of these businesses have operated with limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and an often challenging regulatory environment.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa's declaration that SMEs and cooperatives are now a principal pillar of the economy signals an important policy shift. More significantly, it acknowledges what many Zimbabweans have known for years—that the country's economic future cannot be built without empowering its entrepreneurs.

The Government's commitment to improve access to affordable finance, modernise legislation, develop trading infrastructure and create industrial workspaces offers a promising foundation. Projects such as the redevelopment of Mbare Musika and the establishment of modern markets across the country could transform the operating environment for thousands of small businesses.

Equally encouraging is the call for entrepreneurs to look beyond subsistence trading and embrace manufacturing, innovation and exports. The African Continental Free Trade Area presents opportunities that Zimbabwean businesses cannot afford to ignore. Expanding into regional and continental markets will require improved product quality, greater competitiveness and stronger adoption of technology.

However, declarations alone will not transform the sector. The success of this new approach will depend on implementation. Affordable credit must reach genuine entrepreneurs, regulatory reforms must reduce bureaucratic barriers, and infrastructure projects must be completed efficiently and transparently. Local authorities also have a critical role to play by allocating serviced land for industrial clusters, cooperative business centres and SME workspaces.

The participation of regional and international partners at the inaugural National MSMEs and Cooperatives Indaba demonstrates growing confidence in Zimbabwe's entrepreneurial potential. International cooperation, coupled with local innovation, can strengthen knowledge sharing, technology transfer and market access.

As Zimbabwe advances towards Vision 2030, the country's economic ambitions will be measured not only by policy announcements but by the growth of businesses on the ground. Thriving SMEs mean more jobs, stronger communities, increased exports and a more resilient economy.

The message from the inaugural Indaba is clear: Zimbabwe's entrepreneurs are no longer on the margins of national development. They are at its centre. The challenge now is to convert policy into practical results that empower businesses to grow, compete and prosper.

If Government, the private sector and entrepreneurs work together with determination, this renewed focus on SMEs could become one of the defining economic reforms of the Vision 2030 journey.

President ED Backs Church-State Cooperation

By Hurumende News Hub

BOCHA, Manicaland — President Emmerson Mnangagwa on Saturday joined thousands of congregants at the Johane Marange Apostolic Church's annual Pasika (Passover) celebrations at the St Noah Mafarairkwa Shrine in Bocha, reaffirming Government's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Church in advancing Zimbabwe's national development agenda.

The annual Big Sabbath Service, regarded as the cornerstone of the church's calendar, attracts pilgrims from across Zimbabwe and regional branches in Mozambique, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi.

In a message after the service, President Mnangagwa described his participation as "a profound honour."

"Today, I had the profound honour of joining thousands of devout congregants for the Big Sabbath Service at the Johane Marange Apostolic Church's annual Pasika (Passover) at the sacred St Noah Mafararikwa Shrine in Bocha, Manicaland."

The President said the gathering demonstrates the church's significance not only in Zimbabwe but across the region.

"This holy gathering stands as the true cornerstone of the church's calendar, drawing devoted pilgrims not only from every corner of Zimbabwe but also from our regional sister nations, including Mozambique, South Africa, the DRC and Malawi."

He said his attendance reflected the Second Republic's commitment to working closely with faith-based institutions.

"My attendance today underscores the Second Republic's unwavering commitment to strengthening our collaboration with the Church. Together, as state and faith institutions, we will continue to foster peace, unity and shared values as we advance Zimbabwe's national development agenda toward Vision 2030."

President Mnangagwa later joined congregants for the ceremonial proceedings of the Big Sabbath Service.

During the celebrations, worshippers sang "Taungana taungana Baba Noah, Tovatenda tovatenda Baba Noah" in honour of the late High Priest Mutumwa Noah Taguta, remembering his enduring spiritual leadership within one of Zimbabwe's largest indigenous apostolic churches.

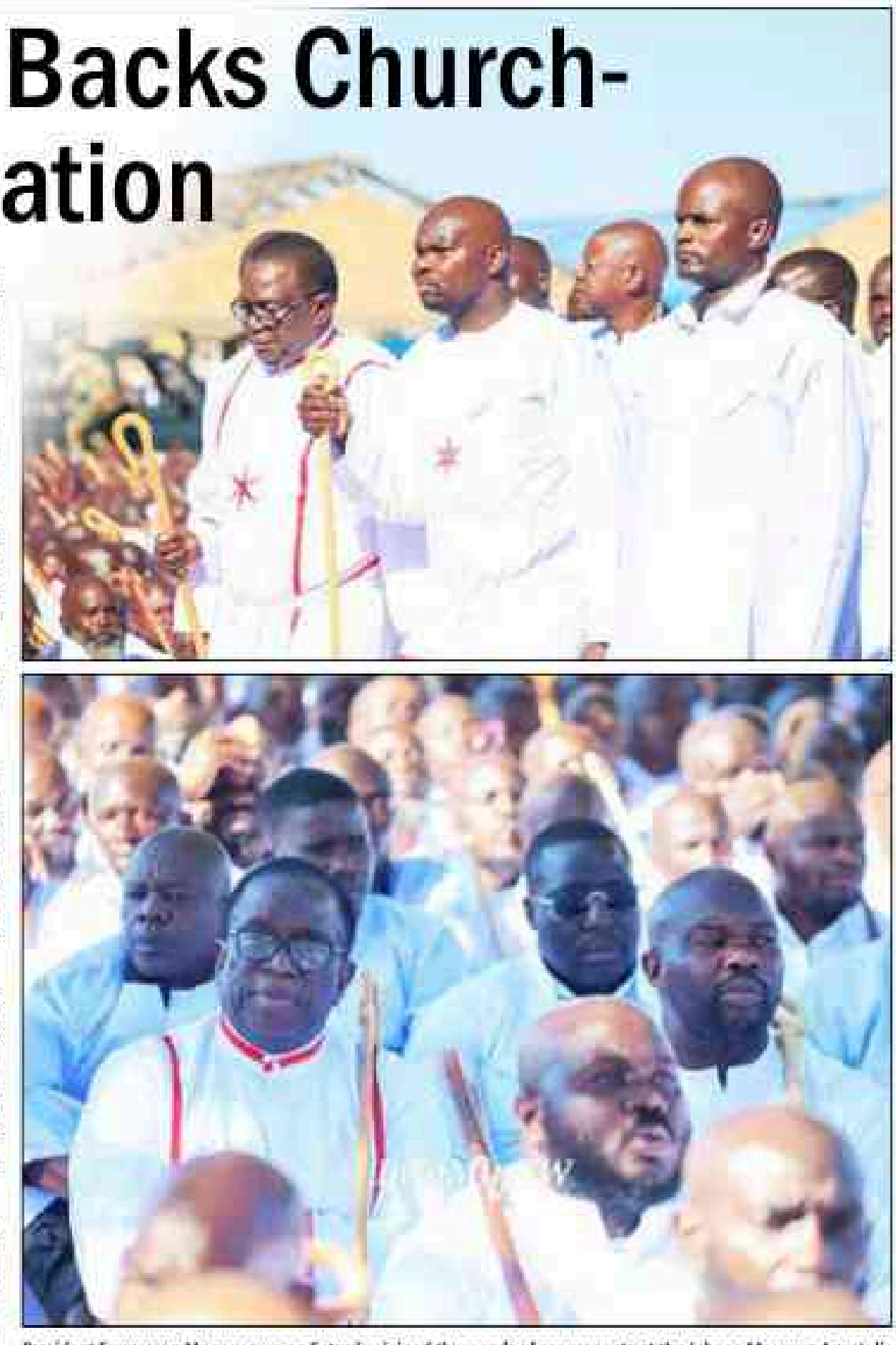
Addressing the gathering, Priest Dura highlighted the complementary roles of the Church and the State.

"The High Priest, Mutumwa St Nimrod Taguta, carries the responsibility of providing spiritual guidance to the faithful, while His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa carries the burden of national stewardship. He must ensure that citizens are fed, markets remain supplied, and national reserves are secured to protect the country against drought."

Among the thousands attending the pilgrimage was Mr Simbarashe Ziyagebha (Daniel) of Sanyati, who spoke about the importance of the annual Passover gathering to his family.

"This pilgrimage is central to our family's spiritual journey. We have been here since the 1st of July and will only leave after taking part in all the Pasika observances."

The Johane Marange Apostolic Church's annual Pasika remains one of Zimbabwe's largest religious gatherings, bringing together thousands of pilgrims in worship while reinforcing cooperation between the Church and Government in promoting peace, unity and national development.



President Emmerson Mnangagwa on Saturday joined thousands of congregants at the Johane Marange Apostolic Church's annual Pasika (Passover) celebrations at the St Noah Mafararikwa Shrine in Bocha

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MINERAL EXPORT BOOM

Zimbabwe's mineral exports surge 84% in H1 2026 driven by value addition and strong global demand.

STRONG GROWTH | VALUE ADDITION | GLOBAL DEMAND

Zimbabwe Cashes In on Mineral Processing

By Shyline Majaji

Zimbabwe's push to beneficiate and add value to its mineral resources is beginning to translate into stronger export earnings, with the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) reporting an 84% increase in mineral exports during the first half of 2026 as demand for processed minerals and favourable international commodity prices boosted revenues.

MMCZ said it facilitated mineral exports worth US$2.532 billion between January and June, compared with US$1.376 billion during the same period last year, reflecting both stronger global markets and the country's gradual shift away from exporting raw minerals.

General Manager Dr Nomusa Jane Moyo said the performance demonstrates the impact of Zimbabwe's beneficiation and value-addition policy, which seeks to maximise export earnings by processing minerals locally before they reach international markets.

"The US$2.532 billion recorded demonstrates the impact of the beneficiation and value addition policy. Based on the market trends and performance of our key mineral commodities, we are confident of surpassing our projected annual revenue this year," Dr Moyo said.

The latest figures reinforce mining's positinn as Zimbabwe's largest foreign currency earner at a time when the government is accelerating industrialisation through downstream mineral processing. Rather than relying solely on export volumes, policymakers have increasingly focused on increasing the value realised from each tonne of mineral exported, particularly as global demand grows for critical minerals used in clean energy technologies.

Platinum group metals remained the backbone of Zimbabwe's mineral exports during the period. PGM matte contributed 33.93% of total export earnings, followed by speduimene concentrates at 26.57% and PGM concentrates at 11.73%. Collectively, the three products generated more than 74% of total export revenue, underscoring Zimbabwe's growing strategic importance as a supplier of platinum group metals and battery minerals to global markets.

The emergence of lithium sulphate as a new export product also signals progress in the country's efforts to move higher up the battery minerals value chain. Unlike raw lithium ore, lithium sulphate undergoes significant local processing before export, allowing Zimbabwe to retain more value from its mineral resources while positioning itself to benefit from rising global demand driven by electric vehicles and energy storage technologies.

"The Corporation views the development as an important step towards establishing Zimbabwe as a regional hub for battery mineral processing," Dr Moyo said.

The corporation said the results demonstrate a broader transformation within Zimbabwe's mining industry, where export performance is increasingly measured by the value of processed products rather than the quantity of raw minerals shipped abroad.

Products such as ferrochrome, steel, polished granite slabs and lithium sulphate are commanding significantly higher export values than unprocessed minerals, aligning with government's Vision 2030 objective of accelerating beneficiation, industrialisation and sustainable economic growth.

The shift comes as resource-rich African economies face growing pressure to capture greater value from their mineral wealth instead of remaining exporters of raw commodities. Zimbabwe has introduced a series of policies over recent years encouraging domestic processing, particularly in lithium and platinum, sectors expected to play an increasingly important role in the global energy transition.

Beyond facilitating exports, MMCZ said it is strengthening mineral accountability through investments in digital systems, laboratory capacity, contract monitoring and mineral valuation to improve transparency and safeguard national mineral revenues. The corporation believes stronger oversight will enhance traceability across the export value chain while improving the efficiency and integrity of Zimbabwe's mineral marketing system.

MMCZ expects platinum group metals, lithium products, ferrochrome, steel and coke to remain the principal drivers of export growth during the second half of the year, supported by continued beneficiation, market diversification and increased downstream processing.

The strong first-half performance suggests Zimbabwe's mining sector is on course for another record year if international commodity prices remain supportive.

However, sustaining growth will depend not only on global demand for critical minerals but also on continued investment in processing capacity, infrastructure and value-addition industries capable of transforming the country's abundant mineral resources into higher-value exports.

ZB's Digital Bet on MSMEs

By Hurumende Business Desk

ZB Financial Holdings has expanded its small business strategy beyond conventional banking with the launch of Smile Mall, a digital marketplace designed to connect micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives, farmers and artisans directly with buyers.

The platform, unveiled during the National MSMEs and Cooperatives Indaba in Harare, signals an evolution in the bank's role from financier to ecosystem builder, positioning digital commerce alongside lending as a driver of enterprise growth and financial inclusion.

For Zimbabwe's MSME sector, the challenge has increasingly shifted from accessing finance to accessing markets. While government programmes, development finance institutions and commercial banks have broadened credit availability over recent years, many small businesses continue to struggle to convert production into consistent sales because of fragmented distribution channels and limited customer reach.

Smile Mall seeks to address that gap by providing businesses with a digital marketplace where they can showcase products, reach wider audiences and transact within an integrated financial ecosystem.

The initiative reflects a broader transformation taking place across global banking, where financial institutions are moving beyond simply financing economic activity to participating directly in the commercial ecosystems that generate it.

Traditionally, banks entered the business relationship when entrepreneurs required loans, opened accounts or processed payments. Digital marketplaces allow financial institutions to engage much earlier by helping businesses acquire customers, generate revenue and build verified transaction histories.

That shift creates opportunities well beyond lending. As businesses trade through the platform, banks can deliver payment solutions, merchant services, working capital finance, insurance, savings and investment products based on real commercial activity.

Perhaps the platform's greatest strategic value lies in the data it generates. Businesses operating through Smile Mall will produce verified records of sales, customer demand and cash flows, providing banks with richer insights into enterprise performance. This allows credit decisions to rely less on traditional collateral and more on demonstrated business activity.

Across financial services globally, transaction data is becoming an increasingly valuable asset. Digital commerce platforms provide lenders with real-time visibility into business performance, enabling financial products to be tailored around actual trading patterns rather than historical financial statements alone.

For Zimbabwe, where many MSMEs operate with limited fixed assets despite strong trading potential, such an approach could help broaden access to finance while supporting greater financial inclusion.

The launch also aligns with Zimbabwe's wider digital transformation agenda. Mobile banking, electronic payments and digital onboarding have expanded significantly over the past decade, with attention now turning towards helping businesses participate more effectively in digital commerce.

These priorities were reflected at the National MSMEs and Cooperatives Indaba, whose agenda focused on financing, digital transformation, industrialisation, market access, workspace development, value chain integration and opportunities arising from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The event underscored growing recognition that improved access to capital alone is insufficient if enterprises remain disconnected from larger domestic and regional markets.

For ZB Bank, Smile Mall also strengthens its competitive positioning in an increasingly digital financial landscape.

Banks are increasingly competing through integrated ecosystems rather than standalone financial products. Businesses that sell, receive payments, borrow, save and insure within a single platform typically develop deeper and more profitable long-term banking relationships than customers using isolated services.

Such ecosystems also diversify revenue streams through merchant acquiring, payment processing, cash management, lending and insurance, all built around continuous commercial activity.

However, the platform's long-term success will depend less on technology than on execution.

Digital marketplaces thrive on network effects: more active sellers attract more buyers, while greater buyer activity creates stronger incentives for additional merchants to join. Maintaining quality, reliability and trust will therefore be critical.

Merchant verification, secure payment systems, reliable delivery, transparent pricing and effective dispute resolution will all influence buyer confidence and repeat transactions.

Beyond domestic retail, Smile Mall could also help position Zimbabwean enterprises for participation in larger value chains as implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area gathers pace.

Businesses with verified digital transaction histories, reliable payment records and established online market presence are likely to be better placed to access procurement opportunities, integrate into corporate supply chains and compete in regional export markets.

If successfully executed, Smile Mall represents more than another e-commerce platform. It signals a strategic shift in Zimbabwean banking, where financial institutions increasingly create value not only by providing capital, but by enabling the commercial activity that generates sustainable economic growth.

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Your call can save a life. Your support can change a future.

Zimbabwe's irrigation drive could spark the green revolution we have been waiting for

By Itai Mazire

For decades, Zimbabwe's farmers have looked to the skies with hope. Every planting season has begun with the same prayer: Will the rains come? That uncertainty has defined the country's agricultural fortunes for years. When the rains arrive on time, harvests are plentiful. When they fail, the consequences ripple across the economy, empty granaries, soaring food prices, rising imports and increased pressure on the Government to feed vulnerable communities.

Against this backdrop, Zimbabwe's decision to expand irrigated land from the current levels to between 250 000 and 300 000 hectares over the next two years is more than another agricultural project. It could become one of the most consequential investments in the country's post-independence history.

If implemented successfully, the initiative has the potential to reshape agriculture, strengthen food security, create employment and reduce Zimbabwe's vulnerability to climate change. The timing could hardly be more important.

Southern Africa has become one of the regions most affected by climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the region is experiencing rising temperatures, more frequent droughts and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns. Zimbabwe has not been spared.

The devastating 2015/16 El Niño drought, one of the worst in decades, left millions of Zimbabweans food insecure. More recently, the 2023/24 El Niño-induced drought significantly reduced maize production, forcing the country to increase grain imports and food assistance programmes.

These recurring shocks underline a simple reality: rain-fed agriculture can no longer be relied upon as the backbone of national food security.

Around the world, countries facing similar climatic challenges have reached the same conclusion.

Israel, where more than half the country is desert, has become a global agricultural powerhouse through advanced irrigation technologies, water recycling and precision farming. Today, it produces over 90 percent of its own food despite severe water scarcity.

Egypt has depended on irrigation from the Nile for centuries, allowing agriculture to flourish in otherwise arid conditions.

Closer to home, Ethiopia has invested heavily in irrigation schemes to boost wheat production. In 2023, the country announced that it had achieved wheat self-sufficiency after years of importing millions of tonnes annually.

Kenya has built a thriving horticulture industry through irrigation, becoming one of Africa's leading exporters of flowers, vegetables and fresh produce to European markets.

Zimbabwe has every reason to believe it can achieve similar success.

The country possesses fertile soils, abundant water bodies and more than 10 000 dams—the second-highest number in Southern Africa after South Africa. Yet only a fraction of this water is fully utilised for irrigation.

This represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Expanding irrigation means farmers can produce crops throughout the year rather than waiting for seasonal rains. It allows wheat to be grown during winter, stabilises maize production and creates opportunities for high-value horticultural exports such as blueberries, citrus, avocados, peas, chillies and macadamia nuts.

The horticulture sector alone has enormous potential.

The Government's Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan aims to transform horticulture into a US$2 billion industry by 2030, driven largely by irrigation expansion, export-oriented production and value addition.

Countries such as Morocco and Kenya have demonstrated how reliable irrigation can transform horticulture into one of the biggest foreign currency earners.

Zimbabwe can follow that path.

The benefits, however, extend far beyond farming.

Agriculture remains one of Zimbabwe's largest employers, directly or indirectly supporting the livelihoods of nearly 70 percent of the population. Expanding irrigation stimulates demand for engineers, irrigation technicians, agronomists, mechanics, transport operators, fertiliser suppliers and agro-processing industries. Rural businesses flourish when farmers have reliable incomes, creating multiplier effects that strengthen local economies.

There is also a compelling economic case.

Zimbabwe continues to spend significant amounts of foreign currency importing wheat, edible oils and other food products that could be produced locally under irrigated conditions.

Reducing imports would ease pressure on scarce foreign currency reserves while strengthening national food sovereignty.

The COVID-19 pandemic and more recently the Russia-Ukraine conflict exposed how fragile global food supply chains can be. Countries that depend heavily on imports are increasingly vulnerable to price shocks and geopolitical tensions.

Food security has become a national security issue.

However, expanding irrigation infrastructure alone will not guarantee success.

Zimbabwe's history includes numerous irrigation schemes that deteriorated because of poor maintenance, inadequate funding, vandalism and weak management structures.

Infrastructure must be matched with sound governance.

Farmers require access to affordable finance, extension services, quality seed, reliable electricity and profitable markets. Water user associations must be strengthened to ensure equitable and sustainable allocation of water resources.

Equally important is the adoption of efficient irrigation technologies.

Traditional flood irrigation wastes enormous volumes of water through evaporation and runoff. Modern systems such as drip irrigation, centre pivots and precision irrigation can dramatically improve water-use efficiency while increasing crop yields.

This is particularly important as climate change continues to place greater pressure on water resources.

Government's investment therefore represents not only an opportunity to increase production but also a chance to modernise Zimbabwe's agricultural sector.

The National Development Strategy recognises agriculture as a cornerstone of economic growth. Achieving the ambition of transforming agriculture into a multi-billion-dollar industry will depend largely on reducing reliance on unpredictable rainfall.

History offers reason for optimism.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Zimbabwe was widely regarded as one of Africa's leading agricultural producers, exporting maize, tobacco, horticultural products and beef across the region.

While the agricultural landscape has changed significantly since then, the country's natural advantages remain.

The challenge is no longer whether Zimbabwe has the resources.

The challenge is whether it has the discipline to maintain infrastructure, support farmers and ensure that today's investments continue delivering results decades from now.

If the planned irrigation expansion is managed effectively, future generations may look back on this moment not simply as another Government project, but as the beginning of Zimbabwe's own Green Revolution.

The rains will always remain beyond human control.

Water management, agricultural planning and food security are not.

That is where Zimbabwe's future will ultimately be decided.

Beyond Prison Walls: Why Zimbabwe Must Embrace Former Inmates

By Takudzwa Karowangoro

When a prison sentence ends, another journey begins.

For thousands of Zimbabweans released from correctional facilities every year, freedom does not always mean acceptance. Many return home carrying the burden of stigma, unemployment and rejection, barriers that scholars say often increase the likelihood of reoffending. It is against this backdrop that the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS) is stepping up efforts to encourage communities to become active partners in offender rehabilitation.

Recently, ZPCS Matabeleland South Province visited Chief Masuku at his homestead in Maitimini, Gwanda North, in an engagement aimed at strengthening cooperation between traditional leaders and correctional authorities to support the successful reintegration of former inmates.

The delegation, led by Assistant Commissioner Tabulile Mathema, Deputy Officer Commanding Matabeleland South Province, included senior officers from the provincial headquarters and Gwanda Prison.

Welcoming the delegation, Chief Masuku described the meeting as an important milestone in strengthening relations between traditional leaders and Zimbabwe's correctional services. "This is a significant occasion for us, as it strengthens the bond between the security services and our community. We look forward to working together to support rehabilitation efforts," he said.

Rehabilitation Begins Beyond the Prison Gate

Across the world, correctional experts increasingly argue that imprisonment alone does not reduce crime. Instead, what happens after an offender is released often determines whether they successfully rebuild their lives or return to criminal activity.

Leading criminologist Professor Shadd Maruna argues that former offenders are far more likely to avoid reoffending when society allows them to rebuild positive identities through employment, family support and community acceptance.

Professor Fergus McNeill of the University of Glasgow has reached similar conclusions, noting that successful rehabilitation depends on meaningful relationships, stable housing, decent work and communities willing to give former offenders a second chance.

These findings mirror the message delivered by ZPCS during its engagement in Gwanda.

Provincial Rehabilitation Coordinator Chief Correctional Officer Mthokozisi Chimbiti urged communities to support released inmates with practical assistance that enables them to rebuild their lives.

"Community support is vital for successful reintegration. It is worthwhile that released inmates be provided with starter packs to help them rebuild their lives and avoid recidivism," he said.

Zimbabwe's Changing Correctional System

Zimbabwe has steadily transformed its correctional system from one focused primarily on punishment to one that prioritises rehabilitation, skills development and successful reintegration. This approach is guided by Section 227 of the Constitution, which mandates the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service not only to keep offenders in safe custody but also to rehabilitate them and prepare them for productive lives after release.

Research by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows that former inmates who secure employment, reconnect with their families and receive community support are significantly less likely to reoffend than those who face rejection and social isolation.

In Zimbabwe, where economic challenges already make rebuilding lives difficult, reintegration remains one of the greatest obstacles facing former offenders. Correctional experts believe that community acceptance, employment opportunities, access to land, starter packs and continued mentorship can significantly reduce repeat offending while improving public safety.

Today, inmates across Zimbabwe's correctional facilities participate in vocational training programmes covering carpentry, welding, bricklaying, tailoring, motor mechanics and other practical trades. Many also receive agricultural training through crop production, livestock, poultry and fisheries projects, equipping them with skills that can generate income after release.

Education has also become a key pillar of rehabilitation, with inmates given opportunities to study for ZIMSEC examinations and pursue tertiary education. Alongside academic learning, correctional facilities provide counselling, psychosocial support, life skills education and programmes designed to address drug and substance abuse. Faith-based organisations also work closely with ZPCS by offering spiritual guidance and moral support throughout offenders' rehabilitation.

To prepare inmates for life after prison, the service promotes entrepreneurship and income-generating projects while encouraging family reunification and community reintegration before release. Eligible offenders may also participate in community service programmes supervised by the courts, while prison farms and industries expose inmates to practical work environments that build discipline, responsibility and employable skills.

These initiatives are strengthened through partnerships with Government ministries, churches, traditional leaders, civil society organisations and private companies, reflecting a growing understanding that rehabilitation cannot be achieved by correctional institutions alone.

Communities Hold the Key

Recognising the influence of chiefs and village heads, ZPCS has intensified engagements with traditional leaders across the country to build stronger community support for rehabilitation.

Assistant Commissioner Mathema said traditional leaders remain critical partners in fulfilling the organisation's constitutional mandate.

"Our officers and inmates are part of the community. Engagement with community leaders is crucial to achieving our constitutional mandate of rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders," she said.

Traditional leaders often play a vital role in resolving disputes, promoting reconciliation and encouraging communities to accept individuals who have completed their prison sentences.

Chief Masuku said the visit had deepened the community's understanding of the role played by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service beyond incarceration.

Giving Second Chances

Research by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows that former inmates who secure employment, reconnect with their families and receive community support are significantly less likely to reoffend than those who face rejection and social isolation.

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The engagement between ZPCS and Chief Masuku demonstrates that rehabilitation is no longer viewed as the sole responsibility of correctional officers. It is increasingly becoming a shared national responsibility involving traditional leaders, families, churches, employers and local communities.

For Zimbabwe, the message is becoming increasingly clear: prisons can equip offenders with skills, education and discipline, but lasting rehabilitation will ultimately depend on whether society is willing to open its doors and offer genuine second chances.

Gwanda Lithium powers rural revival with USD59m plant

Itai Mazire

Gwanda Lithium has ramped up capacity to 73 percent at its USD 59 million processing plant, driving rural industrialisation and retaining youth who once fled the area seeking work, the Industry and Commerce Ministry has said.

Established in January 2023, the project now employs over 460 locals, with 80 percent drawn from surrounding communities, reversing labour migration trends.

"The locals are happy that most of their youth are no longer eager to migrate but rather prefer to stay-on and work at the project," the Ministry said in a statement.

The company is advancing beneficiation to battery-grade lithium, aligning with government policy to capture more value from the country's mineral wealth. A 3.2 MW solar plant is under development to augment power supply.

In a move strengthening domestic value chains, Gwanda Lithium now sources iron balls and steel products from Dinson Iron and Steel, items previously imported. Cement manufacturers are also procuring from Dinson.

The company contracts local suppliers for lonne bags and PPE, engages indigenous transporters for ore haulage and is rehabilitating roads with the Gwanda RDC, RIDA, and Department of Roads. Communities have benefited from borehole drilling to address water shortages.

The project is also set to utilise

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"The locals are happy that most of their youth are no longer eager to migrate but rather prefer to stay-on and work at the project,"

ZDAMWU: USD 418 salary welcome

Itai Mazire

Mine workers deserve "far better than mere survival salaries," Zimbabwe Diamond and Allied Minerals Workers Union (ZDAMWU) General Secretary Justice Chinhema said yesterday, even as he welcomed a new minimum salary of USD 418 for the sector's lowest-paid employees.

"USD 418 is a step forward, not a finish line. Every dollar in this agreement was won at the negotiating table," said Chinhema.

The new wage structure, effective January 1 to December 31, 2026, follows successful negotiations between AMWUZ, ZDAMWU and the Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe.

The agreement covers Grades 1 to 13, with Grade Six workers earning USD 465 and Grade Seven employees USD 484 per month. Top earners in Grade 13 will take home USD 971 monthly.

But the union leader struck a defiant tone, making clear the fight for better conditions was far from over.

"We are fully aware that this outcome is still below workers' expectations and the Poverty Datum Line, and that mine workers deserve far better than mere survival wages," said Chinhema.

The agreement, reached on July 9, 2026, is now awaiting registration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

It retains exemption provisions allowing non-foreign currency-generating mines to pay the full US dollar wage in ZWG currency using the prevailing interbank rate.

Foreign currency-generating companies must pay the full minimum wages in US dollars as stipulated.

Chinhema, however, signalled that dialogue would remain the union's primary weapon in the ongoing battle for improved pay and conditions.

"We shall continue to use the NEC platform to engage with the Chamber of Mines to improve wages and other benefits such as transport, housing and overall conditions of work. Dialogue works, and our approach is engagement all the time, until mine workers' pay and benefits truly match the risk, sacrifice and value of their labour," he said.

The wage structure remains subject to review depending on prevailing economic conditions in the mining industry.

DID YOU KNOW?

Zimbabwe's High-Performance Computing Centre Is Already Powering AI Research

By Hurumende Research Desk

Zimbabwe's High-Performance Computing Centre (HPCC), established with a grant from the Chinese Government, is rapidly emerging as a key driver of the country's artificial intelligence (AI) research and digital transformation agenda.

The facility, which was recently featured on China Central Television (CCTV), has been operational for less than a year and is already supporting research at 15 local universities while significantly improving computing capacity for scientists and researchers.

According to information shared by the Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe, the centre has increased average research computing speeds by 40 percent, enabling researchers to process complex scientific data more efficiently.

Beyond academia, the centre is also being applied to practical national challenges. One of its flagship projects is an AI-powered drought early warning model that has improved water resource utilisation efficiency by 15 percent, demonstrating how advanced computing can contribute to climate resilience and sustainable resource management.

The High-Performance Computing Centre was established under the growing Zimbabwe-China partnership in science, technology and innovation. It provides researchers with the computing power required for data-intensive fields such as artificial intelligence, engineering, health sciences, agriculture, climate modelling and big data analytics.

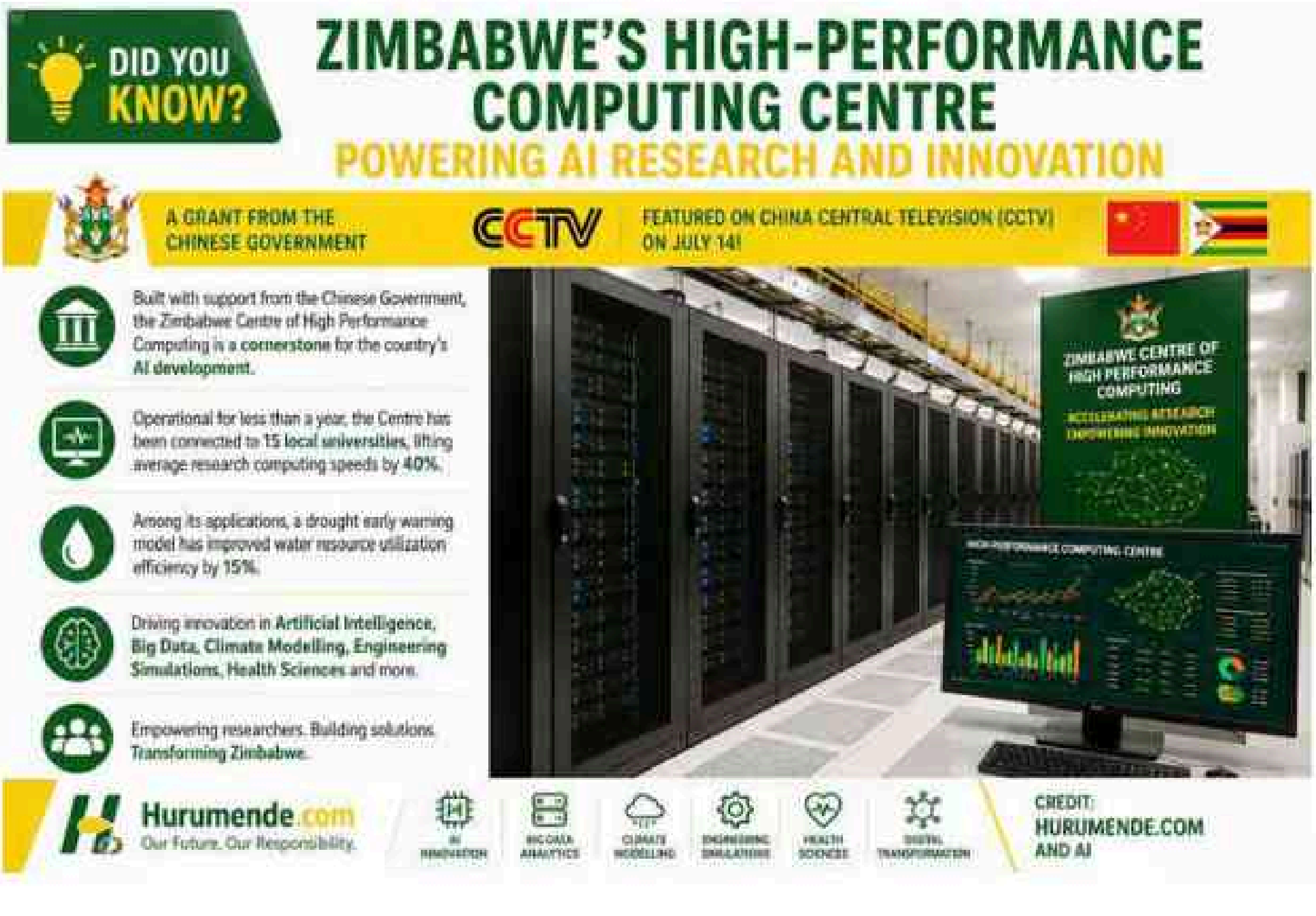
The facility is expected to play a central role in advancing Zimbabwe's digital economy by supporting innovation, scientific research and the development of home-grown technological solutions.

The Government has identified digital transformation as a key pillar of the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) and its successor, NDS2, with artificial intelligence increasingly viewed as an important tool for accelerating economic growth, improving public service delivery and strengthening industrial competitiveness.

The collaboration also reflects expanding cooperation between Zimbabwe and China beyond infrastructure and mining, with increasing investment in education, technology transfer, research and innovation.

As countries around the world race to harness artificial intelligence, Zimbabwe's High-Performance Computing Centre is positioning the country to participate in the global knowledge economy while equipping universities and researchers with world-class computing capabilities.

With research capacity expanding and AI applications already delivering measurable benefits in areas such as drought forecasting and water management, the centre is expected to become a cornerstone of Zimbabwe's future innovation ecosystem.



Lights, Camera, Innovation: Why Africa Can Learn from China's Film Technology Revolution

By Takudzwa Brett Karowangoro recently in Beijing, China

Imagine producing a television programme or blockbuster film without building expensive studio sets, employing dozens of camera operators or spending weeks in post-production. What once seemed like the future is already a reality in China, where cutting-edge technology is changing the way stories are brought to life. For Africa's fast-growing film and broadcasting industry, the lessons could not come at a better time.

At Beijing Zooxer Filming Technology Co., Ltd., innovation is taking centre stage. During a tour of the company's facilities, journalists and media officials from the Global South witnessed how advanced broadcasting systems, artificial intelligence and virtual production technologies are transforming the way television programmes, films and digital content are created.

The visit was more than a showcase of sophisticated equipment. It offered a glimpse into what Africa's creative industry could become if it embraces modern production technologies.

Across the continent, filmmakers and broadcasters continue to produce compelling stories despite limited resources. Yet many studios still rely on ageing equipment, manual production processes and costly physical sets that consume both time and money. As demand for high-quality digital content grows, modern technology is becoming less of a luxury and more of a necessity.

Inside Zooxer's production studios, cameras, lighting, sound and graphics worked together almost effortlessly. Automated systems handled tasks that would normally require several technicians, allowing production teams to deliver polished broadcasts with greater speed and precision.

The technology is designed to improve efficiency without compromising quality. Artificial intelligence assists with camera tracking, lighting adjustments and production workflows, reducing the time required to prepare live broadcasts and edit recorded programmes.

Perhaps the most striking innovation is the company's virtual studio technology. Instead of constructing elaborate physical sets, presenters and actors perform against digital backgrounds that can instantly transform into newsrooms, classrooms, city skylines or historical landmarks.

For African filmmakers, the possibilities are enormous.

Producing visually impressive films often comes with significant costs, particularly when building sets or filming in multiple locations. Virtual production offers a practical alternative, allowing creators to achieve cinematic results while working within tighter budgets. The savings can then be redirected towards stronger scripts, better performances and improved storytelling.

The technology also has implications beyond entertainment. Broadcasters can produce more engaging news bulletins, educational programmes, sports coverage and live events with greater flexibility and lower operating costs. As audiences increasingly consume content online, media organisations will need production systems that can keep pace with changing viewing habits.

China's rapid progress in media technology demonstrates what is possible when innovation is backed by investment. Companies such as Beijing Zooxer are helping redefine modern broadcasting through intelligent studio systems that combine automation, artificial intelligence and digital production into one seamless operation.

For Africa, the opportunity extends beyond purchasing new equipment. Partnerships in technology, training and skills development could help strengthen local film industries, modernise television stations and equip the next generation of producers, directors and technicians with globally competitive skills.

The continent already has no shortage of creative talent. Nollywood has earned international recognition, while filmmakers across Southern, Eastern and West Africa continue to tell stories that reflect the richness and diversity of African cultures. What many productions still lack is access to the technology that can elevate those stories to international production standards.

The tour of Beijing Zooxer served as a reminder that the future of filmmaking is no longer defined by the size of a studio or the number of people behind the camera. It is increasingly shaped by smart technology that allows creators to do more with less.

As Africa's creative economy continues to expand, investing in modern production technology could prove to be one of the smartest decisions the industry makes. The continent has the stories. China's technological innovations show that, with the right tools, those stories can reach even bigger audiences around the world.

Gwanda Lithium powers rural revival with USD59m plant

From page 11

the rail system for transporting lithium are, with the National Railways of Zimbabwe poised to benefit significantly.

"This project is contributing towards Rural Industrialisation in Gwanda with a total investment of USD 59 million.

"To date, their capacity utilisation improved to 73," it stated.

How Zimbabwe and China Are Building Africa's First Lithium Value Chain

By Hurumende Mining Desk

Deep in Goromonzi, towering processing plants, conveyor belts and steaming production units are transforming Zimbabwe's lithium story from one of raw mineral exports into a growing hub for value addition.

During the second day of the Mashonaland East Media Tour, journalists witnessed first-hand how Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe (PLZ) is reshaping the country's mining landscape through large-scale investment, cutting-edge technology and mineral beneficiation.

The tour, led by the Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Hon. Eng. Dr. Polite Kambamura, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland East, Hon. Ruvi Ndudzo, and Permanent Secretary for Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Nick Mangwana, showcased the company's state-of-the-art processing facilities at the Arcadia Mine in Goromonzi.

Since its acquisition by Chinese mining giant Huayou Cobalt in April 2022 under the Government's Open for Business policy, Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe has invested more than US$1.1 billion, making it one of the country's largest investments in the critical minerals sector.

The investment has seen the commissioning of Africa's largest single-capacity Dense Media Separation (DMS) and flotation beneficiation plant in February 2023, followed by the country's first lithium sulphate processing plant in December 2025 with an annual production capacity of 50,000 tonnes.

Addressing journalists during the tour, Minister Kambamura said Zimbabwe was no longer content with exporting raw minerals but was determined to become a regional leader in lithium beneficiation.

"Zimbabwe has successfully established Africa's first lithium sulphate plant with a production capacity of 50,000 tonnes per annum. The plant is currently operating at about 60 percent capacity and is expected to reach full production by 2027," said Minister Kambamura.

He revealed that Government is targeting the completion of a lithium carbonate plant by August 2026, a development expected to move Zimbabwe further up the battery value chain.

"Our vision is not simply to mine lithium but to beneficiate it locally. The lithium carbonate plant will pave the way for battery and solar panel manufacturing, creating more value, more jobs and greater economic benefits for Zimbabwe," he said.

The Minister praised Huayou Cobalt and other lithium producers for honouring commitments made following Government's ban on the export of unprocessed lithium ores.

"We commend investors who have responded positively by establishing processing plants, constructing laboratories, transferring technology, training Zimbabwean workers and complying with Government policy. We will leave no stone unturned in ensuring Zimbabwe derives maximum benefit from its mineral resources," he said.

Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe Mine Manager Mthokozisi Goliath explained that the lithium sulphate plant combines advanced pyrometallurgical and hydrometallurgical technologies to maximise efficiency and product quality.

"The plant operates through three production lines. The process starts with roasting to convert alpha spodumene into beta spodumene before proceeding through leaching, counter-current decantation, filtration, evaporation and final concentration to produce lithium sulphate," said Goliath.

He noted that the integrated processing system enables the company to consistently produce high-quality lithium sulphate for international markets.

Beyond mineral processing, the investment is making a significant contribution to Zimbabwe's economy.

Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe and its associated Arcadia Technology Zimbabwe operations currently employ approximately 2,000 people directly while supporting another 2,000 indirect jobs across the value chain.

The company is expected to generate more than US$800 million in annual foreign currency earnings from 2026, while contributing substantial tax revenues to the national fiscus. During the first half of 2026 alone, Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe paid more than US$60 million in taxes.

The company has also expanded its investment beyond mining by committing to establish two internationally accredited national laboratories and entering into a skills development partnership with China's Ningbo Polytechnic, aimed at strengthening Zimbabwe's technical expertise in mineral processing.

Another key component of the investment is the Sandawana Joint Venture between Huayou Cobalt and Kuvimba Mining House, launched in 2023 under a Build-Operate-Transfer framework. Together with Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe and Arcadia Technology Zimbabwe, the project is creating what Government describes as a complete lithium industrial value chain.

As global demand for critical minerals continues to surge, Zimbabwe is positioning itself as more than just a supplier of raw lithium. Through beneficiation, technology transfer and downstream industrialisation, the country is laying the foundation for a battery manufacturing industry that could play a pivotal role in the global clean energy transition.

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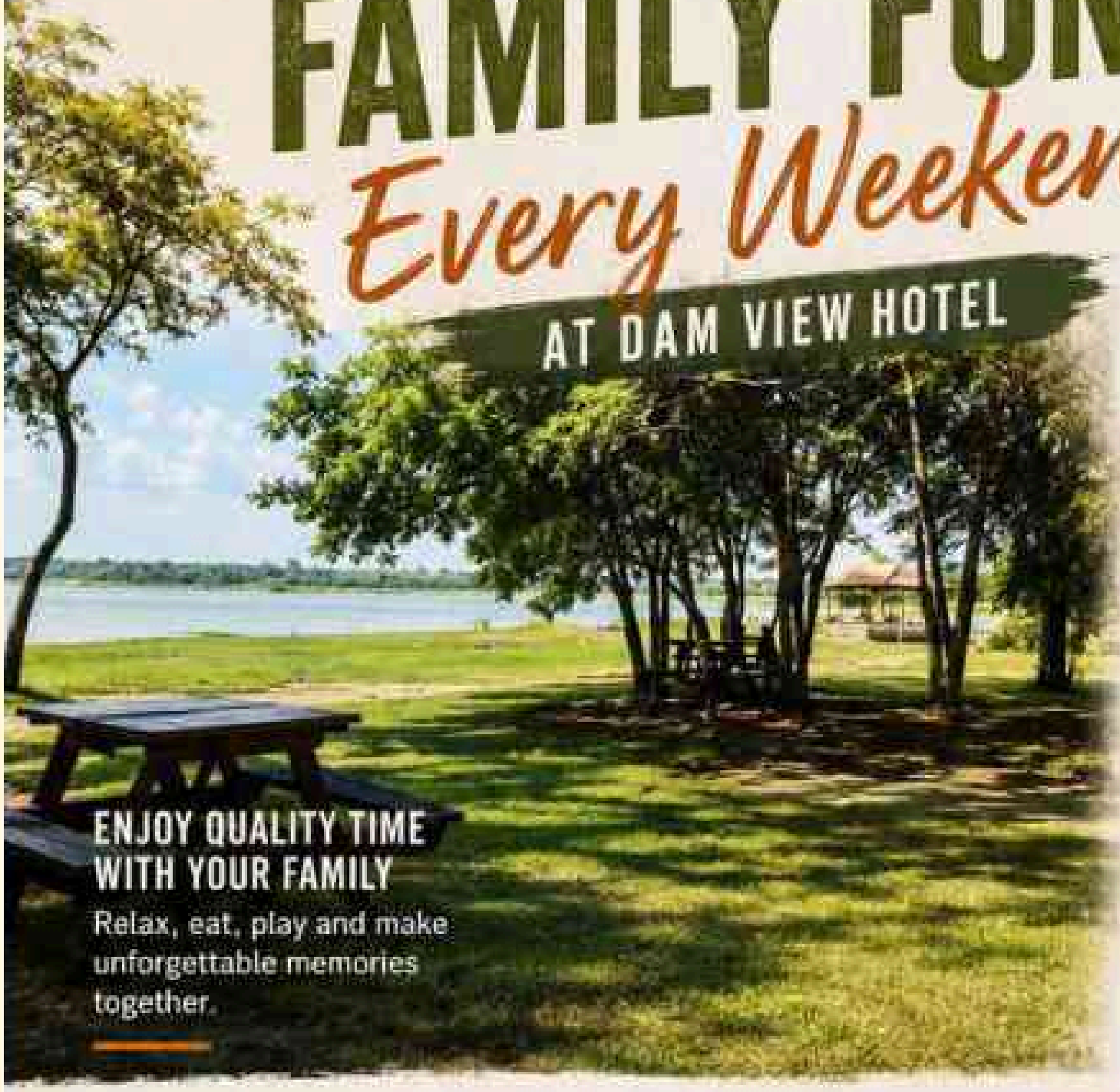

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Donor Retreat Pushes Health Costs onto Families

New health financing data shows government, donors and households are taking turns funding Zimbabwe's health system, but shrinking external support is increasingly leaving ordinary families to bridge the gap.

By Shylinn Majaji

Zimbabwe's health financing system is becoming increasingly unstable as government, donors and households take turns carrying the largest share of the country's health budget, with no single source providing consistent long-term support.

New National Health Accounts data covering 2021 to 2024 shows sharp shifts in who pays for healthcare each year, while external funding has fallen dramatically, forcing households to shoulder a growing share of medical costs.

The findings point to a financing model marked less by chronic underfunding than by volatility, making long-term planning difficult for both government and healthcare providers.

Government funding accounted for 39.2% of health expenditure in 2021 before plunging to 13.8% in 2023. It recovered to 33.6% in 2024, illustrating significant year-to-year swings in public financing.

Donor funding moved in the opposite direction, rising from 35.6% of total health expenditure in 2021 to 43.5% in 2023 before falling sharply to 25.3% in 2024.

The alternating pattern suggests external partners have repeatedly filled funding gaps created by reduced government spending, only for that support to weaken as donor priorities shifted.

The biggest losers have been Zimbabwean households.

Out-of-pocket payments and contributions through medical aid schemes rose from 19.8% of health spending in 2021 to 30.4% in 2023 before easing slightly to 23.4% last year.

Health economists warn that increasing reliance on direct household payments raises the risk of catastrophic health expenditure, where families spend a significant portion of their income on healthcare.

National data already indicates that nearly 12% of Zimbabwean households experience catastrophic health spending, with the burden rising to almost 19% among urban households.

The pressure on the sector has intensified following a sharp decline in external assistance.

Since 2021, Zimbabwe's health system has relied heavily on three major development partners — the Global Fund, USAID/PEPFAR and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — which collectively provided the bulk of external financing for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria programmes.

Combined donor contributions remained close to US$500 million annually between 2021 and 2023 before falling to US$219 million in 2025, representing a decline of more than 55%.

USAID funding, which contributed US$143 million in 2021, has effectively disappeared from the financing mix, while the Global Fund and CDC have also reduced their support.

The withdrawal exposes the risks of relying on a small number of external financiers to sustain essential health programmes.

While Zimbabwe's Health Financing Strategy identifies reducing donor dependence as a national priority, replacing external resources with domestic funding remains a significant challenge.

Government has increasingly relied on ring-fenced revenue streams such as the AIDS Levy, one of the country's most consistent sources of domestic health financing.

However, questions remain over whether newer taxes on airtime, mobile data and sugar-sweetened beverages are translating into additional resources for healthcare or merely replacing funding that would otherwise have come from Treasury.

Without greater transparency, analysts say it is difficult to determine whether domestic health financing is genuinely expanding.

The latest figures suggest Zimbabwe's health system is being sustained through shifting contributions rather than a stable financing framework.

As donor support contracts and government spending continues to fluctuate, households are increasingly becoming the financier of last resort — a trend that could undermine efforts to achieve universal health coverage and deepen financial hardship for ordinary Zimbabweans.

Zimbabwe National Health Accounts (2021–2024); Ministry of Health and Child Care; Zimbabwe Health Financing Strategy (2021–2025); Global Fund; PEPFAR; US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Inside Zimbabwe's US$2bn Horticulture Plan

By Takudzwa Karowangoro

Professor Dr Obert Jiri tours Marsland Farm in Umguza District, Matabeleland North Province, where he reaffirmed Government's commitment to developing a US$2 billion horticulture industry by 2030.

Zimbabwe is making steady progress towards building a US$2 billion horticulture industry by 2030, with the sector increasingly playing a central role in agricultural transformation, food security and economic growth.

During a tour of Marsland Farm in Umguza District, Matabeleland North Province, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development, Professor Dr Obert Jiri said the Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan is laying the foundation for horticulture to become a major contributor to the Government's goal of growing the agricultural sector into a US$15.8 billion industry by 2030.

"The Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan is positioning the country to make horticulture a key contributor towards Government's vision of growing agriculture into a US$15.8 billion economy by 2030," said Professor Dr Jiri.

He noted that production of high-value crops, including citrus, blueberries, pecan nuts, avocados and vegetables, continues to expand, creating opportunities for farmers, exporters and agro-processing companies while strengthening the sector's contribution to the national economy.

According to Professor Dr Jiri, increased local production of tomatoes, cabbages and beetroot has improved the availability of fresh produce on the domestic market and reduced reliance on imports.

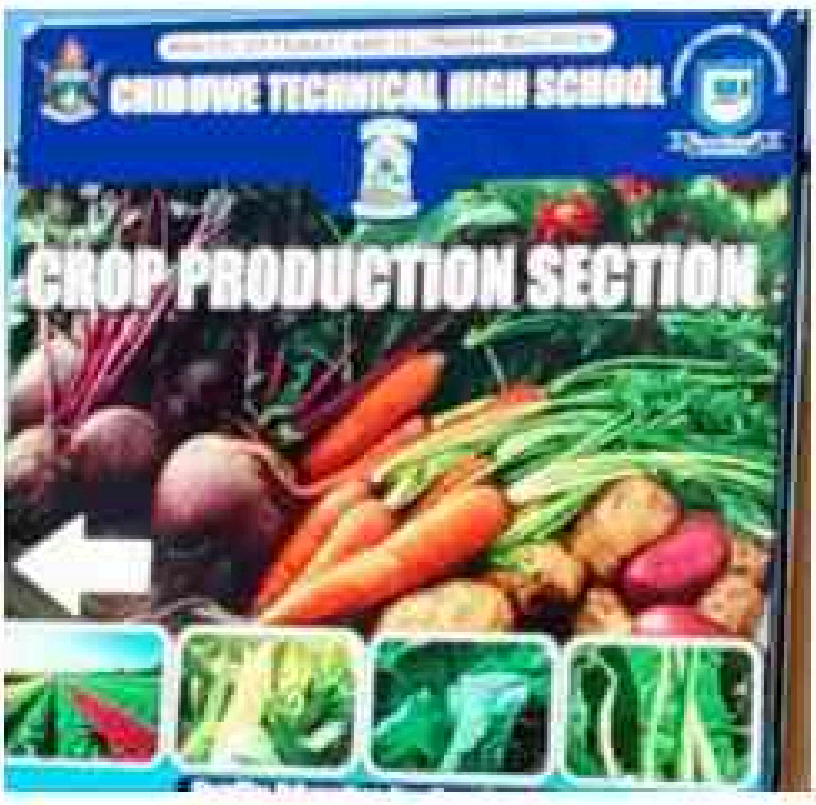
He said Government is also prioritising the expansion of Irish potato and rice production to meet growing consumer demand and support the country's expanding fast-food industry. The initiative is being complemented by market-oriented farming practices, including the use of crop calendars and the Grow-to-Sell approach, to ensure production aligns with market demand.

Professor Dr Jiri added that continued investment in irrigation infrastructure and reliable water supply systems is enabling year-round production, improving productivity and helping farmers cope with the effects of climate change.

"Backed by irrigation development and reliable water infrastructure, horticulture is strengthening both food and nutrition security while building resilience against climate change," he said.

The Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan forms part of Zimbabwe's broader agricultural modernisation strategy, which seeks to increase production, promote value addition, expand export markets and improve livelihoods in rural communities.

Chibuwe Technical High School Sets Benchmark with High-Impact Agricultural Project



By Harumende News Hub

Chibuwe Technical High School is emerging as a leading example of education with production after transforming eight hectares of previously virgin land into a thriving agricultural enterprise under Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's Communication and Advocacy team visited the school as part of preparations for this year's Zimbabwe Agricultural Show, where they witnessed first-hand the school's ambitious agricultural project that combines practical learning, entrepreneurship and sustainable production.

The school has cleared and fenced eight hectares of land, installed drinking troughs and established infrastructure to support livestock and crop production. The project currently accommodates a herd of 40 cattle, alongside goats and sheep, providing learners with practical experience in livestock management while promoting food security and income generation.

The initiative is positioning Chibuwe Technical High School as a centre of excellence in school-based production, entrepreneurship and Technical and Vocational (TechVoc) skills development, in line with the Ministry's vision of producing learners who are innovative, self-reliant and equipped for the demands of the modern economy.

Speaking during the visit, Director of Communications and Advocacy in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Mr Taungana Ndoro, said the project exemplifies the Government's commitment to ensuring learners acquire practical skills that empower them beyond the classroom.

"The Government's intention is to equip every learner with the knowledge, competencies and practical skills required to become productive citizens who contribute meaningfully to national development. What we are witnessing at Chibuwe Technical High School is a practical demonstration of the Heritage-Based Curriculum in action, where education is directly linked to production, innovation and entrepreneurship."

Mr Ndoro said schools are increasingly becoming centres of innovation where learners are exposed to real-life experiences that prepare them for employment, self-employment and wealth creation.

"The Heritage-Based Curriculum is transforming our schools into hubs of productivity. Learners are no longer confined to theoretical knowledge but are actively participating in projects that develop critical thinking, problem-solving, business acumen and technical skills. This is the type of education that will drive Zimbabwe's industrialisation and economic transformation."

He commended Chibuwe Technical High School for embracing the Ministry's vision, describing the institution as a model for other schools across the country.

"This project demonstrates what is possible when school leadership, teachers and the community work together to implement Government policy. Chibuwe has shown that schools can become centres of excellence that not only impart knowledge but also produce goods, create value and inspire innovation among learners."

Mr Ndoro said initiatives such as the Chibuwe agricultural project contribute to food security while instilling a strong work ethic, environmental stewardship and entrepreneurial culture among learners.

"Our objective is to produce graduates who are job creators rather than job seekers. Through projects like these, learners leave school with practical agricultural, technical and entrepreneurial skills that enable them to participate confidently in Zimbabwe's socio-economic development."

The project is expected to feature prominently at this year's Zimbabwe Agricultural Show as one of the Ministry's flagship examples of successful implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

Education officials say Chibuwe Technical High School's achievements demonstrate how education with production is transforming schools into centres of innovation, supporting national food security, fostering entrepreneurship and advancing Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 aspirations.

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Dreamstar Opens Doors to China

By Tsitsi Ndabambi

What began as a modest talent search ten years ago has grown into one of Zimbabwe's most enduring platforms for young artists, opening doors to international stages, higher education and careers that extend far beyond music and dance.

As Dreamstar Zimbabwe unveiled plans for its landmark tenth season, organisers said the competition has become more than an entertainment event. It now stands as one of the most successful examples of Zimbabwe-China cultural cooperation, using the creative arts to empower young people, promote cultural exchange and strengthen people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Launched under the China-Zimbabwe Exchange Centre by founder Zhao Ke, Dreamstar Zimbabwe has, over the past decade, provided opportunities to more than 5,000 aspiring performers while producing household names such as Nyasha David, Probeats and Sufe.

Speaking to Hurumende on Sunday, Dreamstar Zimbabwe Managing Director Walter Chanaka said the initiative was established to discover and nurture talent, but its impact has expanded significantly over the years.

"Over the years, more than 5,000 artists have been given a voice and a stage through this platform," Chanaka said.

He said Dreamstar has become a bridge connecting Zimbabwean creatives with opportunities beyond the country's borders.

This year, a delegation of 30 performers will travel to China to perform on one of the country's major stages as part of the long-running Zimbabwe-China cultural exchange programme.

"This is cultural diplomacy in action," Chanaka told Hurumende on Sunday.

He said the partnership demonstrates that cooperation between Zimbabwe and China extends well beyond infrastructure, mining and trade.

"The exchange programme has opened opportunities that many young Zimbabweans would never have imagined. Some of our former contestants have received scholarships to study in China, and several have gone on to build successful careers, not only in the arts but also in other professional fields," he said.

More Than Entertainment

For years, Zimbabwe-China relations have largely been associated with infrastructure projects, mining investments, agriculture and trade.

"This is cultural diplomacy in action," Chanaka told Hurumende on Sunday.
He said the partnership demonstrates that cooperation between Zimbabwe and China extends well beyond infrastructure, mining and trade.
"The exchange programme has opened opportunities that many young Zimbabweans would never have imagined. Some of our former contestants have received scholarships to study in China, and several have gone on to build successful careers, not only in the arts but also in other professional fields."

However, cultural cooperation has quietly become another important pillar of the bilateral relationship.

Through initiatives such as Dreamstar Zimbabwe, young Zimbabweans are being exposed to international audiences, professional production standards and educational opportunities that continue to shape their careers.

The programme has become a practical example of cultural diplomacy, where music, dance and the performing arts are used to strengthen understanding between nations while creating opportunities for young people.

Globally, the creative economy is increasingly recognised as a major contributor to economic growth. According to UNESCO, cultural and creative industries generate more than US$2 trillion annually and support nearly 50 million jobs worldwide, with young people accounting for a significant share of employment in the sector.

For Zimbabwe, initiatives such as Dreamstar demonstrate how investment in creative talent can contribute to youth empowerment, employment creation and economic development.

Preparing Artists for the Global Stage

Technical Director Tashinga Madzamba told Hurumende on Sunday that this year's production has been designed to prepare contestants for international careers rather than simply winning a competition.

"We are intentionally exposing our contestants to professional production standards so that when opportunities arise beyond Zimbabwe, they are already familiar with the expectations of world-class productions," he said.

He revealed that the production team has invested heavily in lighting, LED technology, stage design and special effects to create performances that match international standards.

"We are building worlds, not just stages," Madzamba said.

He believes raising production standards is critical if Zimbabwean performers are to compete successfully on regional and international platforms.

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"We are building worlds, not just stages."

A Platform That Gives Back

For Creative Director Mongameli Dhlamini, Dreamstar's success story is deeply personal.

Having entered the competition as a dancer with Bulawayo's Supergeeks crew in 2016, he now returns as one of the people responsible for shaping this year's performances.

Speaking to Hurumende on Sunday,

"I never imagined that years later I would be here, not just watching the next generation of talent, but guiding their artistic expression from behind the scenes."

This year's choreography blends Afro Fusion, R&B and contemporary dance with Zimbabwean traditional influences, reflecting both the country's cultural heritage and the artistic exchange taking place between Zimbabwe and China.

"We are not just creating movement, we are sculpting performers," Dhlamini said.

Dhlamini described his appointment as a full-circle moment.

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Investing in Zimbabwe's Creative Economy

Chanaka believes the private sector has an important role to play in ensuring Dreamstar continues to grow.

He appealed to businesses, development partners and corporate organisations to support the initiative, arguing that investment in creative industries delivers long-term economic and social benefits.

"By investing in Dreamstar, you are not just funding an event; you are investing in the creative economy," he told Hurumende on Sunday.

He said Zimbabwe's creative industry has enormous untapped potential, particularly among young people seeking opportunities to showcase their talent on both local and international platforms.

Looking Beyond Season Ten

The tenth season will culminate in what organisers describe as the most elaborate grand finale in the competition's history at the 7 Arts Theatre on August 15.

Past winners, including Mwenje Mathole, Fusion Five Mangwiro and Mimi, will return to perform alongside this year's finalists in a celebration that also serves as a mentorship platform for emerging talent.

For Dreamstar Zimbabwe, however, the anniversary is about more than celebrating ten successful seasons.

It is about demonstrating how sustained investment in young people, combined with international partnerships, can transform lives.

As Zimbabwe and China continue to deepen cooperation across education, technology, culture and economic development, Dreamstar Zimbabwe has become one of the clearest examples of how cultural exchanges can create lasting opportunities.

For hundreds of young Zimbabweans who step onto the Dreamstar stage each year, the competition offers more than applause. It offers confidence, skills, international exposure and, for some, a pathway to opportunities they never imagined possible.

Baba Harare's Ethiopian Airlines Complaint Sparks Flood of Passenger Complaints Online

By Hurumende News Hub

Baba Harare's public complaint about Ethiopian Airlines has triggered an outpouring of similar experiences from travellers, with many taking to the comments section of his Facebook post to share stories of delayed baggage, poor customer service and travel disruptions.

The musician's post quickly gained traction, attracting hundreds of reactions and comments from passengers who claimed they had faced comparable challenges while flying with the airline.

Among them was Pamela Tari Manjeza-Hughes, who recounted how her family was stranded in Geneva for more than 12 hours after their flight developed a technical fault while travelling from Harare to Manchester. She said they were later rerouted through London, arrived home a day late and incurred additional costs, including more than £200 in excess baggage fees after being instructed to collect and recheck their luggage.

Other social media users alleged that delayed or missing baggage had become a recurring issue.

"I am surprised you have remained loyal to Ethiopian Airlines. They have normalised losing people's bags," wrote Keith Munyaradzi Madhovoyo, adding that he now preferred flying with Qatar Airways or Emirates. Baba Harare replied that he was only hearing about many of the alleged incidents after sharing his own experience.

The comments section also attracted fellow entertainers, with comedian BigSam The Comedian joking that Ethiopian Airlines was "doing people a favour" because those whose bags were lost would not have to carry them. Baba Harare responded in jest, saying they would eventually have to carry the luggage once it was recovered.

Musician Baba Rejo also joined the conversation, expressing sympathy for Baba Harare's situation. The singer responded light-heartedly, thanking him for the support.

In another exchange, a follower, Stevans Musonza, advised Baba Harare to contact Ethiopian Airlines through X (formerly Twitter), saying the airline was more responsive on the platform. Baba Harare replied that he had already tried raising the matter on social media.

Earlier in the discussion, Baba Harare thanked followers for sharing their experiences and tagging Ethiopian Airlines, joking that the comments section had turned into a "bag recovery centre" as more passengers narrated their own travel mishaps.

The viral discussion has since become a platform for travellers to voice their frustrations, with many calling for improved customer service and better baggage handling.

Ethiopian Airlines had not publicly responded to the specific allegations raised in the Facebook discussion at the time of publication.

Castle Lager Premier Soccer League – Week 23 Round-Up

The Castle Lager Premier Soccer League delivered another thrilling weekend of football as six fixtures produced closely contested encounters, with five of the six matches decided by a single goal.

FC Platinum secured an important 1-0 away victory over Bulawayo Chiefs at Luveve Stadium to strengthen their position in the league standings. ZPC Kariba also claimed maximum points on the road, edging TelOne 1-0 at Ascot Stadium in a disciplined performance.

Chicken Inn continued their positive run with a narrow 1-0 win over FC Hunters at The Heart Stadium, while Ngezi Platinum made home advantage count, defeating Herentals 1-0 at Baobab Stadium.

MWOS maintained their impressive form with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Agama at Ngoni Stadium, proving once again that they can grind out results when it matters most.

The standout performance of the day came at Sakubva Stadium, where CAPS United produced an excellent display to defeat Manica Diamonds 2-0 away from home. It was the only match of the round to feature more than one goal, with the Green Machine delivering an assured performance to claim all three points.

Week 23 Results

* Bulawayo Chiefs 0-1 FC Platinum
* TelOne 0-1 ZPC Kariba
* FC Hunters 0-1 Chicken Inn
* Ngezi Platinum 1-0 Herentals
* MWOS 1-0 Agama
* Manica Diamonds 0-2 CAPS United

With every point becoming increasingly valuable as the season enters its decisive stages, Week 23 highlighted the fine margins that continue to define the race for league honours, continental qualification, and survival.

Chibuwe Technical High School Partners ZIFA to Train Certified Soccer Referees

By Next Level Sports

Chibuwe Technical High School is expanding opportunities for learners beyond the classroom through a partnership with the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) that is training pupils as certified football referees under the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

The initiative, which forms part of the school's Technical and Vocational Education (TechVoc) programme, has seen several boys and girls successfully complete referee training and obtain Level 2 and Level 3 refereeing certificates, equipping them with professional skills that can create employment opportunities within the sporting sector.

The programme reflects the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's commitment to implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum, which seeks to nurture learners' talents while providing practical competencies that prepare them for life beyond school.

Speaking on the impact of the programme, Form Three learner Nenyasha Komichi said the partnership with ZIFA has transformed her passion for football into a valuable professional skill.

"The referee training has given me confidence and opened opportunities I never imagined. I am now a certified referee and have gained knowledge of the laws of the game, leadership, discipline and decision-making. I am grateful that my school has given girls the same opportunity as boys to pursue their dreams in football."

Nenyasha said the certification has inspired her to pursue a future in football officiating while encouraging other girls to participate in sport.

School authorities said the partnership demonstrates how the Heritage-Based Curriculum is broadening learners' career pathways by integrating education with practical skills development in diverse fields, including sport.

Beyond producing certified referees, the programme is instilling values of integrity, discipline, teamwork and leadership while exposing learners to potential careers in sports administration and officiating.

The initiative also complements Government efforts to promote Technical and Vocational Education by ensuring learners graduate with marketable skills that can contribute to employment creation and national development.

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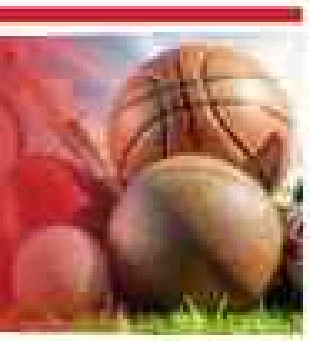

ONE TROPHY, TWO NATIONS, One Moment That Will Echo Through History

By Next Level Sport

The countdown is over.

The roar of the crowd grows louder. The floodlights illuminate the pitch. Millions sit on the edge of their seats, while billions around the world pause everything for a single spectacle. In just a few moments, history will unfold before our eyes.

For weeks, the 2026 FIFA World Cup has delivered unforgettable drama. Dreams have been realized, hearts have been broken, and heroes have emerged from the unlikeliest of places. Every goal has sparked celebration, every save has inspired hope, and every final whistle has changed the destiny of a nation.

The world's finest footballers have fought through relentless challenges to reach this stage. Legends have defended their legacy, young stars have announced their arrival, and underdogs have reminded us that belief can overcome even the greatest odds. Every match has been a chapter in a story filled with passion, sacrifice, and resilience.

Now, the tournament reaches its defining moment.

The margin between triumph and heartbreak has never been thinner. One brilliant strike could ignite a nation's celebrations. One costly mistake could become a memory that lasts forever. In football, greatness is often decided in the smallest of moments—and tonight, every second matters.

As the players step onto the field, they carry more than a jersey. They carry the hopes of millions, the pride of their countries, and the dream of lifting the most coveted trophy in world football. There is no room for fear, no second chance, and no easy path to immortality.

Who will rise when the pressure is at its greatest? Who will write their name into football history? And who will leave the field knowing they gave everything, yet fell just short of glory?

The answers remain hidden in the next ninety minutes.

When the final whistle sounds, one team will stand at the summit of world football, their names forever engraved alongside the greatest champions the game has ever known. The other will walk away with nothing but memories of how close they came.

Until that moment arrives, the world waits in silence, anticipation filling every stadium, every home, and every heart.

Because the FIFA World Cup is more than a tournament. It is where legends are born, history is written, and the impossible becomes reality. The next chapter is about to begin—and the world is watching.