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Zimbabwe Wins IMF Vote of Confidence

Strong fiscal management, tight monetary policy and robust economic growth pave the way for debt restructuring and renewed international engagement.

By Takudzwa Karowangoro

Zimbabwe's economic reform programme has received a major endorsement from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), with the Fund reaching a staff-level agreement to complete the first review of the country's 10-month Staff-Monitored Programme (SMP), signalling grow-

ing confidence in the Government's fiscal and monetary policy reforms, Hurumende News Hub can reveal. The agreement, announced following an IMF mission to Harare from

June 9 to 18, is subject to IMF Management approval and marks another important milestone in Zimbabwe's drive to clear external arrears, restore debt sustainability and re-en-

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Mutoko Emerges as President Mnangagwa's Blueprint for Rural Industrialisation



President Emmerson Mnangagwa addresses delegates during the commissioning of the Mutoko Bioeconomy Industrial Park, where he reaffirmed the pivotal role of Heritage-Based Education 5.0 in driving rural industrialisation, innovation and sustainable national development. Picture Credit: InfoZW. **FULL STORY ON PAGE 3**

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Zimbabwe Wins IMF Vote of Confidence

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gauge with the international financial community.

Announcing the outcome of the mission, IMF team leader Mr. Wojciech Maliszewski said, "We are pleased to announce that IMF staff and the Zimbabwean authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on policies to complete the first review under Zimbabwe's 10-month Staff-Monitored Programme."

He said completion of the review "marks an important step in consolidating recent stabilization gains and building a track record toward arrears clearance, debt restructuring, and re-engagement with the international community."

The positive assessment reflects reforms spearheaded by Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion Professor Mthuli Ncube, whose fiscal consolidation agenda has centred on prudent

public spending, enhanced domestic revenue mobilisation and strengthening public financial management systems.

The IMF noted that implementation of the programme through the end of March 2026 had been satisfactory, with Zimbabwe meeting all quantitative performance targets, including those on the primary budget balance, accumulation of net official international reserves, limits on external borrowing and growth of the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) monetary base.

The Fund also acknowledged the Government's commitment to maintaining fiscal discipline.

"Staff welcomes the authorities' commitment to maintain spending within the approved 2026 national budget, while saving additional revenues to build buffers for potential food-security needs in 2027," Mr. Maliszewski said.

The IMF further commended Government's efforts to strengthen bud-

get execution, improve commitment controls and enhance public financial management—key reforms championed by Treasury as part of efforts to improve transparency, fiscal credibility and investor confidence.

On the monetary front, the IMF recognised the role played by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, under Governor Dr. John Mushayavanhu, in restoring macroeconomic stability through a disciplined monetary policy framework anchored on the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) currency.

Since the introduction of the ZiG in April 2024, the Reserve Bank has maintained tight liquidity management, curtailed excessive money supply growth and strengthened reserve accumulation, measures the IMF said had helped contain inflation and stabilise the exchange rate.

"The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has maintained a tight monetary policy stance to contain inflation and reduce pressures in the foreign exchange

market," Mr. Maliszewski said.

The Fund also welcomed the operationalisation of the ZiG-denominated term deposit facility, describing it as an important step towards a more market-based monetary policy framework and deeper domestic money markets.

The IMF encouraged authorities to continue liberalising the foreign exchange market while reforming the country's foreign exchange intervention framework to further strengthen confidence in the local currency.

Zimbabwe's economy, the Fund said, has remained resilient despite external shocks, including higher fuel and fertiliser prices, rising transport costs and shipping disruptions linked to conflict in the Middle East.

After expanding by 8.3 percent in 2025, the economy is projected to grow by about 5 percent in 2026, driven by a strong rebound in agriculture, increased mining production and favourable international gold prices.

Inflation is expected to average about 5.1 percent this year, while the current account is projected to remain in surplus on the back of strong mineral and agricultural exports and resilient diaspora remittances.

The IMF warned, however, that Zim-

babwe's outlook remains vulnerable to climate-related risks, particularly the possibility of an El Niño-induced drought, as well as continued geopolitical tensions that could increase commodity prices and disrupt global supply chains.

The Fund stressed that continued reforms in governance, fiscal risk management and public financial management would be critical to consolidating macroeconomic stability and supporting inclusive economic growth.

It also reaffirmed that resolving Zimbabwe's external arrears remains central to the country's economic recovery and welcomed ongoing efforts by Government to engage creditors and development partners on a comprehensive debt resolution strategy.

The IMF mission met Professor Mthuli Ncube, Dr. John Mushayavanhu, senior Government officials, private sector representatives, civil society organisations and development partners during its visit.

Once approved by IMF Management, completion of the first review is expected to reinforce investor confidence, support Zimbabwe's arrears clearance process and strengthen prospects for renewed access to international financial markets.



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Mutoko Emerges as President Mnangagwa's Blueprint for Rural Industrialisation

By Shylina Majaji

The launch of the Mutoko Bioeconomy Industrial Park is not only being celebrated as an industrialisation milestone but is also emerging as a powerful demonstration of how Zimbabwe's education reforms are being translated into tangible economic development.

While infrastructure projects are often measured by their economic value, the Mutoko initiative has placed education at the centre of rural transformation, showcasing how institutions of higher and tertiary

learning are becoming active participants in national development.

Speaking during the commissioning of the project, President Emmerson Mnangagwa reaffirmed that education remains fundamental to Zimbabwe's long-term development strategy.

"No nation in its development agenda can neglect the quality of its education system, more-so given the direct correlation between rising educational standards and sustained national progress," said President Mnangagwa.



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Gvt reassesses air treaties

Itai Mazire

Government is reviewing all bilateral air service agreements with African nations to align with continental liberalisation goals, as intra-African connectivity surges by nearly 60 percent since 2021, Transport Minister Hon. Adv. Felix Mhona announced Friday at the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) airshow in Harare.

The country signed the Solemn Com-

mitment to implement SAATM in 2022 and has since adopted all eight concrete measures required under the framework, which aims to create a unified African aviation market.

"Zimbabwe is currently reassessing all BASAs with the SAATM Member States, to ensure they are in compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision," Adv. Mhona told delegates from across the continent. The Yamoussoukro Decision, adopted in 1999, seeks to liberalise air transport

services among African states, allowing airlines to operate freely across national borders.

According to the 2025 SAATM Implementation Report, intra-African connectivity jumped from 14.5 percent in 2021 to 23 percent in 2025.

Adv. Mhona attributed the growth largely to expanded use of Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights, which permit airlines to carry passengers between two foreign countries as part of an international route network.

"The full implementation of SAATM remains of strategic importance to Africa's socio-economic transformation."

Zimbabwe has invested significantly in airport modernisation through public-private partnerships, including expanding Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport's capacity from 2 million to 6.5 million passengers annually.

The government is also implementing an Aeronautical Message Handling System to improve air navigation services and operational safety.

"The time has come for us to dismantle the barriers that impede its success, including excessive protectionism, market

access restrictions and non-tariff impediments affecting the growth of African aviation," he said.

The SAATM initiative supports the African Continental Free Trade Area by enabling seamless movement of people, goods, services and investment across the continent as part of the African Union's Agenda 2063 vision.

"There is indeed a lot of work to do and impediments to deal with along the journey."

Adv. Mhona called on member states yet to embrace the initiative to join the "noble cause."

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A Bold Health Promise That Must Be Matched by Action

Zimbabwe's decision to create 32 000 new health posts by 2030 is one of the most ambitious commitments ever made to the country's public health system. If fully implemented, it has the potential to transform healthcare delivery, restore confidence in public hospitals and bring essential services closer to millions of Zimbabweans.

For years, the country's health sector has operated under immense strain. Hospitals and clinics have struggled with chronic staff shortages, erratic medicine supplies, ageing infrastructure and the steady loss of skilled professionals to better-paying jobs abroad. Patients have too often borne the consequences through overcrowded wards, long waiting times and limited access to life-saving treatment.

Against this backdrop, the National Health Strategy 2026-2030 offers hope. Increasing the public health workforce by more than half is no small undertaking. Combined with commitments to improve medicine availability, modernise health facilities, strengthen digital health systems and equip every district hospital, the strategy outlines a vision that many Zimbabweans have long wished to see become reality.

But ambitious plans have never been Zimbabwe's greatest challenge. Implementation has.

The country has witnessed numerous well-crafted policy documents whose aspirations have ultimately collided with fiscal realities. This strategy now faces the same test. While government has approved thousands of new posts and pledged to recruit aggressively, the question is whether the financial resources will keep pace with the promises. Treasury's allocation to the Ministry of Health remains well below the ministry's projected requirements, raising legitimate concerns about whether recruitment, procurement and infrastructure development can proceed at the desired scale.

The numbers tell a sobering story. Zimbabwe's health worker density remains significantly below international recommendations, medicine availability in public facilities remains inconsistent, and donor funding that has supported critical health programmes for decades is steadily declining. At the same time, thousands of skilled health professionals continue to leave the country each year in search of better salaries, improved working conditions and greater career opportunities.

Recruitment alone will not solve this crisis.

The country must retain the professionals it trains. Competitive remuneration, decent accommodation, reliable equipment, opportunities for career progression and safe working environments are no longer optional incentives—they are essential investments. Without addressing these fundamentals, Zimbabwe risks filling vacancies only to watch newly recruited workers join the growing exodus overseas.

Equally important is accountability. The proposed performance management framework should not become another administrative exercise. Clear targets, regular public reporting and transparent monitoring will determine whether communities experience tangible improvements or continue hearing promises that fail to materialise.

Healthcare is more than a government service; it is a measure of national dignity. Every mother who delivers safely, every child who receives timely treatment and every patient who finds essential medicines on hospital shelves reflects the strength of the country's commitment to its people.

The National Health Strategy provides an opportunity to reset Zimbabwe's healthcare system. It deserves public support because its objectives are necessary and long overdue. Yet it must also be subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Citizens have every right to expect measurable progress rather than well-intentioned declarations.

History will not judge this strategy by the number of posts announced or policies launched. It will judge it by the nurses who remain at their stations, the doctors who choose to build careers at home, the medicines available on clinic shelves and, ultimately, the lives saved.

The announcement of 32 000 new health posts is a welcome beginning. The real achievement will be ensuring those posts are funded, filled and sustained. Zimbabwe cannot afford another plan that inspires hope only to be remembered for promises left unfulfilled.



32 000 new health workers in massive recruitment drive

Itai Mazire

In the largest health sector recruitment drive in Zimbabwe's history, Health and Child Care Minister Dr Douglas Mombeshora unveiled a government plan to create a staggering 32 000 new health posts by 2030.

A game-changing move aimed at ending the crippling staff shortages that have pushed the country's hospitals to breaking point.

Unveiling the National Health Strategy 2026-2030 in Harare, Mombeshora declared that the massive workforce expansion would propel Zimbabwe towards the internationally recommended health worker density standard, finally giving patients access to the care they desperately need.

The current health worker-to-population ratio stands at a dire 1.3 per 1 000, well below the WHO-recommended 2.3 per 1 000.

The 32 000 new posts represent a 55 percent increase over the current public sector health workforce of approximately 58 000.

The ambitious blueprint also targets a sweeping overhaul of the entire health sector, from medicines availability to infrastructure and digital connectivity.

"Our priority is to reduce morbidity and mortality from communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases and mental health conditions while ensuring that every Zimbabwean has access to quality, affordable healthcare," he said.

The strategy sets hard-hitting targets, drastic cuts to maternal and perinatal mortality, a boost in modern contraceptive prevalence and a guarantee that every district will have a fully equipped hospital with reliable water and power.

All health facilities are set for an internet overhaul to integrate health information systems.

"We are targeting significant reductions in maternal and perinatal mortality while increasing the prevalence of modern contraceptive use. Protecting the health of mothers, newborns, children and adolescents remains at the centre of this strategy because healthier families are the foundation of national development."

Dr Mombeshora also took direct aim at the crippling medicine shortages that have turned public hospitals into symbols of despair.

"Our goal is to increase the availability of medicines and health commodities so that no patient goes without the treatment they need," he said, promising to overhaul procurement and supply chains."

This comes as medicine availability at public facilities has averaged a dismal 47 percent, just shy of the 50 percent minimum stock target.

Government is scrambling with a USD 10 million injection to push availability above 55 percent.

A key pillar of the strategy is brute accountability. The Ministry will roll out a performance framework with rewards and consequences, for failure.

"The strategy also seeks to modernise health infrastructure by ensuring every district has a fully equipped hospital, while all health facilities will have reliable water and electricity supplies. "The healthier families are the foundation of national development."

The recruitment push comes as Zimbabwe's health sector is hemorrhaging staff.

More than 35 900 Zimbabweans were granted UK work visas between June 2023 and June 2024, most taking healthcare jobs abroad.

Nurses still earn less than USD 300 monthly, with some forced to manage nurse-to-patient ratios of 1 to 20, far above safe standards.

Government has already approved 8 785 new health posts for 2026 as it intensifies recruitment, with about 3 700 of 5 284 posts from 2025 already filled.

A USD 11.8 million retention package targets rural health workers through accommodation and career support.

The 2024 health allocation stood at just 9.8 percent of the national budget, far short of the Abuja target of 15 percent, though 2025 saw an uptick to 13.01 percent – the highest in five years.

But Treasury has already capped the 2026 health allocation at just ZWLD 24.19 billion, a mere 28 percent of the ministry's ZWLD 85.3 billion request.

This has raised serious questions over whether the ambitious 15 percent target is achievable.

Permanent Secretary Aspect Maungandize recently warned that donor support is shrinking, particularly from USAID and PEPFAR programmes that have historically bankrolled HIV, TB and maternal health initiatives.

"Access to essential medicines is a fundamental component of quality healthcare and we are committed to strengthening procurement and supply systems," said Dr Mombeshora.

He has previously described the strategy as a "social contract with the people of Zimbabwe, a commitment that every citizen, whether in urban centres or rural communities, will have access to quality care."

The strategy aligns with Vision 2030, which seeks to transform Zimbabwe into an upper-middle-income economy, with health as a "driver of development".

"The era of planning without implementation is over," Mombeshora has vowed. With a funding crisis looming, a brain drain raging, and medicine shelves near-empty, Zimbabweans will be watching closely to see if this time, the promise is kept.

Zimbabwe Strikes Gold

By Hurumende Business Desk

Zimbabwe's gold sector is emerging as the country's strongest economic pillar after June deliveries to Fidelity Gold Refinery reached a record 4.81 tonnes, reinforcing confidence that the nation is on course to achieve its ambitious 50-tonne production target this year. The milestone comes at a critical time when Zimbabwe is relying on export earnings to strengthen the ZiG, improve foreign currency liquidity and finance economic growth. Official figures show that miners delivered 21.39 tonnes of gold during the first six months of 2026, the highest first-half output ever recorded in Zimbabwe and a 6.4 percent increase from the corresponding period last year. The latest production surge is being driven largely by artisanal and small-scale miners, who contributed 3.58 tonnes in June—almost three-quarters of the country's total deliveries. Their growing dominance reflects increasing formalisation of the sector, improved access to Fidelity Gold Refinery and

strong international gold prices that continue to encourage production. Large-scale mining companies also maintained steady output, delivering 1.23 tonnes during the month, providing consistency to Zimbabwe's overall gold production. For Zimbabwe, however, the significance of the latest figures extends beyond mining. Gold remains the country's largest foreign currency earner, and with international prices at record levels, this year's production could generate between US\$7 billion and US\$7.5 billion in export earnings. Such inflows are expected to strengthen foreign exchange reserves, support the stability of the ZiG and improve the country's capacity to finance imports and strategic development projects. The strong performance also provides a boost for mining communities across Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Midlands, Manicaland and Matabeleland, where thousands of livelihoods depend directly or indirectly on gold mining activities.

Production trends further indicate that Zimbabwe's mining sector is gathering momentum rather than slowing down. While the first quarter produced 9.30 tonnes, output accelerated to 12.09 tonnes in the second quarter, reflecting improved mining conditions during the dry season and increased deliveries by small-scale producers responding to favourable market prices. To meet the government's 50-tonne target, Zimbabwe requires an average monthly production of about 4.77 tonnes during the second half of the year. June's 4.81 tonnes has already surpassed that threshold, placing the target firmly within reach if production levels are sustained. The latest figures also underscore the growing importance of artisanal and small-scale miners in Zimbabwe's economy. Once viewed as peripheral players, they now account for more than 70 percent of national gold deliveries and have become central to the coun-

try's export performance. As global demand for gold remains strong amid economic uncertainty, Zimbabwe stands to benefit from favourable market conditions. For policymakers, maintaining production, strengthening formal marketing channels and sup-

porting mining investment will be key to translating record gold output into broader economic gains. With half the year completed, Zimbabwe's gold sector has already laid the foundation for what could become its most successful production year on record bringing the country's 50-tonne target, stronger export earnings and improved macroeconomic stability within striking distance.



By Takudzwa Karowangoro

Zimbabwe has completed its first commercial shipment of fresh blueberries to China, marking the country's entry into one of the world's largest premium fruit markets and converting a market access agreement signed in 2025 into active trade. The export comes as Zimbabwe begins to benefit from China's zero-tariff policy for imports from 53 African countries, which took effect on 1 May 2026, strengthening the competitiveness of the country's horticultural exports in the Chinese market. According to the Horticultural Development Council (HDC), the shipment

represents a significant milestone for Zimbabwe's agricultural export sector and signals the start of a new phase in the country's efforts to diversify export markets. "China has opened the door; we must now make sure we have enough product to walk through it," HDC Chief Executive Officer Linda Nielsen said. The shipment follows the signing of a bilateral phytosanitary protocol during President Emmerson Mnangagwa's state visit to Beijing in September 2025. The agreement established the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements governing Zimbabwean blueberry exports before China's General Administration of Customs published

Blueberry Breakthrough Opens China's Billion-Dollar Market to Zimbabwe

detailed import regulations covering orchard registration, packhouse approval, quarantine inspections and phytosanitary certification. The first commercial consignment marks the transition from diplomatic negotiations to commercial trade. While Zimbabwe has secured access to the Chinese market, industry stakeholders say the focus now shifts to expanding production, maintaining strict quality standards and developing reliable export logistics. China represents a major growth opportunity for Zimbabwe's horticulture industry due to rising consumer incomes, rapid urbanisation and growing demand for premium fresh produce. The introduction of zero tariffs further enhances Zimbabwe's competitiveness by reducing the landed cost of its exports and providing exporters with greater pricing flexibility. However, industry experts caution that tariff preferences alone will not guarantee success. Fresh blueberries require uninterrupted cold-chain management, efficient freight services, rapid customs clearance and strict ad-

herence to quality standards to reach consumers in optimal condition. The development forms part of Zimbabwe's broader strategy to expand horticultural exports alongside traditional foreign currency earners such as mining and tobacco. Government and industry have identified products including blueberries, avocados, citrus, macadamia nuts and flowers as key drivers of future export growth, particularly in Asian markets. Despite rapid growth in domestic blueberry production, China continues to import premium berries to meet increasing consumer demand and fill seasonal supply gaps. The market remains dominated by major exporters such as Peru and Chile, while South Africa leads blueberry exports from Southern Africa. Zimbabwe is expected to compete through favourable production timing, premium fruit quality, traceability and improved market access under the zero-tariff arrangement rather than production volumes alone.

The export opportunity is also expected to stimulate investment beyond primary production, creating demand for irrigation systems, cold-storage facilities, packhouses, packaging manufacturers, freight forwarding services, certification providers and quality assurance laboratories. China's phytosanitary standards remain among the most stringent globally. Exported blueberries must originate from registered orchards, comply with traceability requirements, pass quarantine inspections and be accompanied by official phytosanitary certificates. Failure to meet these requirements could result in shipment rejections and jeopardise future market access. With market access secured and tariff barriers reduced, industry stakeholders say Zimbabwe's next challenge will be scaling production, strengthening cold-chain infrastructure, reducing logistics costs and improving access to long-term finance to ensure consistent supply. The inaugural shipment is widely viewed as the beginning of a new export corridor rather than the culmination of Zimbabwe's horticultural ambitions. The sector's long-term success will depend on its ability to consistently deliver premium-quality produce while meeting the rigorous standards of one of the world's most competitive fresh produce markets.

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Zimbabwe Renews Drive For Open African Skies

By Tsitsi Ndabambi

Zimbabwe has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), positioning aviation as a catalyst for deeper regional integration, trade, tourism and economic growth across the continent.

Speaking during the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) SAATM Pilot Implementation Project Airshow in Harare, Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development Advocate Felix Tapiwa Mhona said Africa could only unlock its full economic potential by removing barriers that continue to limit air connectivity between member states.

Hosted at Rainbow Towers on 9-10 July, the workshop accelerated the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market under the theme, "Acceleration of Air Transport Liberalisation in Africa to Improve Continental Connectivity and Integration." The programme focused on translating continental aviation policies into practical action through regulatory harmonisation, increased market access and stronger collaboration among African states.



collective commitment to promoting greater connectivity, economic growth and regional integration across Africa."

The Minister said Zimbabwe remained fully committed to implementing the Yamoussoukro Decision by reviewing all Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASAs) with fellow SAATM member

ing a modern aviation system capable of supporting increased passenger and cargo traffic.

He highlighted that the upgrading of Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport, Joshua Nkomo International Airport and Victoria Falls International Airport through Public-Private Partnerships, noting that the expansion of Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport had increased annual passenger handling capacity from approximately two million to 6.5 million.

He added that Zimbabwe had strengthened aviation safety through the installation of a Secondary Surveillance Radar System, upgraded Air Traffic Control technology and the rollout of an Aeronautical Message Handling System to facilitate faster transmission of critical flight information.

Calling for greater continental cooperation, the Minister urged African countries to eliminate protectionist policies and restrictions that continue to constrain the growth of the aviation sector.

"The time has come for us to dismantle the barriers that impede its success, including excessive protectionism, market access restrictions and non-tariff impediments affecting the growth of African aviation."

The workshop featured technical presentations on the SAATM Pilot Imple-



mentation Project Road Map, Zimbabwe's implementation progress, COMESA's contribution to aviation liberalisation, airport readiness, sustainable air transport development, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Protocol on the Free Movement of People and Goods. Delegates were also expected to adopt a communiqué outlining the way forward under the Lomé Declaration.

Industry representatives welcomed Zimbabwe's progress towards implementing the open skies initiative.

planned return to London later this month reflected growing confidence in Zimbabwe's aviation reforms, adding that the airline's recovery strategy was aligned with broader efforts to improve regional and international connectivity.

The final part of the session was a high-level panel discussion on the role of air transport in promoting tourism, trade and investment, strategies for accelerating SAATM implementation and strengthening collaboration among aviation stakeholders. Participants



Addressing delegates, Minister Mhona described the gathering as an important milestone in Africa's journey towards a seamless air transport network.

He commended the African Civil Aviation Commission and its partners for spearheading reforms designed to make African aviation more competitive while improving the movement of people, goods and investment across borders.

"This timely initiative, spearheaded by the African Civil Aviation Commission and its partners, demonstrates our

states to align them with continental aviation liberalisation objectives.

Drawing from the 2025 SAATM Implementation Report, he noted that intra-African air connectivity had increased from 14.5 percent in 2021 to 23 percent in 2025, a development largely attributed to the broader application of Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights, which allow airlines to operate more flexible international routes across multiple countries.

Mhona said Zimbabwe had matched policy reforms with significant infrastructure investments aimed at creat-



Fastjet Zimbabwe representative Nunurai Ndawana said the discussions had demonstrated the country's preparedness to implement SAATM commitments, adding that continued investment in airport infrastructure was creating a more efficient operating environment for airlines.

Air Zimbabwe Engineer Edmund Makona said the national carrier's

participants included Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development Joshua Sacco, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority Chief Executive Dr George Manyaya, officials from the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe, Air Zimbabwe, the Airports Company of Zimbabwe, immigration and customs authorities, the African Union Commission and other regional aviation institutions.



ZMC Equips Journalists With AI Skills For Digital Newsrooms

By Hurumende News Hub

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) this week stepped up efforts to prepare the country's media sector for the rapidly evolving digital landscape, hosting a capacity-building workshop in Harare on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism.

The training brought together media practitioners from across the city to build practical skills in using AI-powered newsroom tools, while reinforcing the ethical principles that underpin credible journalism. Participants took part in hands-on exercises, including group presentations, exploring how AI can improve efficiency in news gathering, content production and information verification.

Opening the workshop, ZMC Director of Media Development and Gover-

nance Nyaradzo Hazangwi outlined the programme's objectives, emphasising that the initiative is designed to help journalists adapt to technological change without compromising professional standards. According to the Commission, the workshop focuses on practical AI applications, enabling journalists to integrate emerging technologies into their daily work while maintaining editorial responsibility.

The Harare workshop is part of a broader nationwide capacity-building programme the Commission has been rolling out in recent weeks. Similar workshops have already been held in Kadoma, Chinhoyi and Gweru, reflecting ZMC's commitment to equipping journalists countrywide with the knowledge needed to navigate the media industry's digital transformation.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly reshaping newsrooms worldwide, helping journalists transcribe interviews, translate content, summarise lengthy documents, analyse large datasets, generate graphics and support fact-checking. While these technologies can significantly cut production time and boost productivity, media experts continue to stress that human editorial oversight remains indispensable.

Addressing participants, Hazangwi noted that the digital era has fundamentally changed how audiences consume news, with information now spreading rapidly through social media long before it reaches traditional newsrooms. She said AI gives media organisations an opportunity to work more efficiently, particularly in resource-constrained environments, but cautioned that the technology should

complement rather than replace journalists' professional judgment.

"The goal is not to replace journalists but to free them from repetitive work so they can spend more time on reporting and analysis," she said. Hazangwi also urged media organisations to establish clear internal policies governing AI use, to minimise the legal, ethical and reputational risks associated with inaccurate or misleading AI-generated content.

The workshop also examined the ethical implications of AI adoption, including concerns around misinformation, algorithmic bias, data privacy and so-called "AI hallucinations" instances where AI systems generate inaccurate or fabricated information. Participants were encouraged to treat AI-generated material as a starting point requiring rigorous human verification before

publication.

The Commission's approach aligns with growing international conversation around responsible AI governance in journalism. Around the world, media organisations are increasingly investing in AI training while strengthening editorial safeguards to preserve public trust. Industry experts argue that as AI grows more sophisticated, journalists will play an even more critical role in verifying facts, providing context and ensuring accountability in the information ecosystem.

By combining practical digital skills with ethical newsroom practices, the Zimbabwe Media Commission hopes to position Zimbabwean journalists to harness artificial intelligence responsibly while safeguarding the accuracy, credibility and integrity that remain the foundation of quality journalism.

CCZ Unveils First-Ever Media Awards

By Tsitsi Ndabambi

The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) has launched its inaugural Media Awards as part of a broader drive to strengthen consumer protection through quality journalism, while encouraging media practitioners to play a greater role in educating the public, exposing unfair business practices and promoting accountability.

The awards were officially unveiled during a media breakfast workshop held at Monomatapa Hotel, where the council also outlined its vision for building a long-term partnership with journalists and media organisations. The initiative seeks to recognise excellence in journalism that promotes consumer rights, ethical business practices and informed public discourse on consumer protection.

Speaking during the workshop, CCZ Director of Corporate Affairs Mr P. Chereni described the awards as the beginning of a stronger and more structured relationship between the council and the media.

He noted that journalists have played a critical role over the years in informing, educating and empowering consumers through reporting on issues affecting the marketplace.

"The media is no longer just a channel for news but an indispensable partner in consumer empowerment," Chereni said.

He explained that the awards will recognise journalists whose work has advanced consumer education, accountability and ethical business

practices, while encouraging greater interest in consumer affairs reporting as a specialised journalism beat.

Chereni observed that consumer protection has evolved significantly, with emerging issues such as digital commerce, artificial intelligence, cross-border trade and online scams requiring more informed and consistent media coverage.

He added that each news report, feature or broadcast highlighting consumer rights and exposing unfair business practices contributes to building a more informed and resilient society.

Consumer Council of Zimbabwe Chief Executive Officer Rose Mpofu emphasised that closer collaboration between the council and the media was essential, given that many Zimbabweans remain unaware that the organisation exists despite having served consumers for more than seven decades.

"We always say that the media is our mouthpiece," she remarked. "People often ask, 'Where is the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe?' because many do not know that this 71-year-old organisation still exists."

Mpofu apologised for delays journalists have sometimes experienced when seeking information from the organisation and pledged improved responsiveness.

"I promise that from today onwards I will not delay when you are asking for information," she said.

Mpofu told journalists that CCZ was established in 1955 and has since become Zimbabwe's leading consumer

protection organisation, carrying out consumer education, complaint handling, research, policy advocacy and alternative dispute resolution.

She described the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act in November 2019 as a major milestone that strengthened legal safeguards for consumers by prohibiting unfair business practices and providing stronger mechanisms for resolving disputes.

She noted that the legislation outlawed practices such as blanket "No Returns" and "No Refunds" notices in cases where consumers are legally entitled to remedies, while promoting fairness between consumers and businesses.

"The Act is not there simply to protect consumers against businesses," she said. "It is there to create fairness in the marketplace so that consumers receive value for money while businesses operate responsibly."

The CEO urged consumers to read contracts carefully before signing them, noting that many disputes arise because people agree to terms they do not fully understand.

She also revealed that the council is reviewing the methodology used for its monthly Family Basket report, which tracks the cost of basic household necessities, after it remained largely unchanged since 2019.

During a presentation on the media's role in consumer protection, Njabulo Ncube argued that journalists remain central to protecting consumers through investigative reporting, public education and holding busi-



nesses accountable.

He explained that the media influences consumer behaviour through advertising and information dissemination, while also acting as a watchdog against exploitation.

Ncube, however, warned that commercial pressures arising from dependence on advertising revenue could sometimes discourage critical reporting on major advertisers.

He urged journalists to maintain editorial independence and continue producing balanced, evidence-based reports that serve the public interest.

"The media is both a driver of consumer behaviour and a guardian of consumer rights," he said.

According to CCZ the Media Awards will recognise reporting that high-

lights consumer issues, promotes accountability in the marketplace and advances consumer rights, while fostering stronger partnerships between CCZ, the media, regulators and other stakeholders. The workshop also introduced the awards' objectives, categories, eligibility criteria and adjudication process, while providing a platform for stakeholder input to strengthen the initiative.

CCZ said it expects the Media Awards to become an annual platform celebrating excellence in consumer journalism and encouraging more sustained coverage of issues affecting consumers across sectors including health, education, telecommunications, financial services and retail.



1,000 New Schools on the Cards

By Abel Karowangoro

Government has signed a US\$420 million agreement to construct up to 1,000 modern primary and secondary schools across the country, in a move expected to significantly expand access to education and address long-standing infrastructure shortages.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed between the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and MAGCOR Consortium Group of Companies Zimbabwe (Private) Limited, is one of the largest education infrastructure agreements announced in recent years.

The programme will finance the construction of new schools, rehabilitation of existing learning institutions, teachers' accommodation and supporting educational infrastructure across Zimbabwe's 10 provinces.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Harare, Primary and Secondary Education Minister Dr Torerayi Moyo said the initiative was about transforming communities through education.

"Every school constructed under this programme represents far more than bricks and mortar. It represents hope for a child, opportunity for a community and a lasting investment in Zimbabwe's future."

Dr Moyo said the project supports Government's objective of ensuring that no learner walks more than five kilometres to the nearest school, a challenge that continues to affect many rural communities.

He said the agreement also gives practical effect to President Emmerson Mnangagwa's policy of "leaving no one and no place behind" by extending modern educational facilities to underserved areas.

Under the agreement, MAGCOR Consortium will mobilise a US\$420 million development package covering project financing, technical expertise and construction management to deliver the programme.

MAGCOR Consortium Group Chief Executive Officer Michael Joseph Glynn

said the project would be financed through a non-recourse funding model that would not create additional sovereign debt obligations for Government.

He also announced that implementation would begin without delay.

"The first visible construction activities are expected within the next 60 days," Glynn said.

According to the agreement, completed schools will be handed over to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to operate as public institutions.

The investment comes as Zimbabwe continues to face growing demand for classroom space driven by population growth, expanding settlements and increased enrolment. Many schools, particularly in rural districts, continue to grapple with overcrowded classrooms and limited infrastructure.

Government says the programme is aligned with Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2, which



Primary and Secondary Education Minister Dr Torerayi Moyo

identify education and human capital development as key pillars of economic transformation.

The latest agreement also builds on Government's school expansion drive, which has seen more than 500 new schools constructed over the past three years through devolution funding and partnerships with churches and the private sector.

While the signing marks an important step towards addressing Zimbabwe's education infrastructure deficit, the success of the initiative will ultimately depend on implementation. With construction expected to begin within two months, attention will now shift from the signing ceremony to whether the promised schools are delivered on schedule and provide improved learning opportunities for thousands of Zimbabwean children.

Anti-Graft Watchdog Pushes Political Finance Reforms

By Abel Karowangoro

Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Zimbabwe) has called on Parliament to urgently enact the Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill, saying stronger legal safeguards for corruption whistle-blowers are critical to improving accountability and strengthening the country's anti-corruption framework.

The call comes as Zimbabwe joined the rest of the continent in commemorating Africa Anti-Corruption Day on Saturday under the African Union theme, "Scaling Up the Promotion of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Actions Across Africa."

In a statement, TI Zimbabwe welcomed the gazetting of the Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill, 2026, describing it as a significant step towards encouraging citizens to report corruption without fear of victimisation.

"We commend the gazetting of the Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill, 2026, and welcome its progression to Parliament for consideration. Once enacted and effectively implemented, the legislation has the potential to significantly strengthen the protection of individuals who report corruption and other public interest disclosures," the organisation said.

The anti-corruption watchdog urged legislators to prioritise debate on the Bill to strengthen Zimbabwe's legal framework against corruption in line with regional and international commitments.

TI Zimbabwe also identified political financing as one of Africa's emerging governance challenges, warning that weak regulation of campaign funding and limited disclosure of political donations create opportunities for

corruption, undue influence and the misuse of public resources.

"Transparent and accountable political finance is fundamental to protecting democratic processes, ensuring fair political competition, and preventing undue influence over public decision-making," the organisation said.

It called on African governments to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks governing political finance, improve public disclosure of campaign funding, regulate the use of public resources during elections and empower independent oversight institutions to enforce political finance laws effectively.

While acknowledging progress made in Zimbabwe through public procurement reforms, strengthened anti-corruption institutions and accountability initiatives, TI Zimbabwe said sustained implementation and enforcement remain key to achieving meaningful results.

The organisation said there was scope to deepen reforms as Zimbabwe prepares to implement the next National Anti-Corruption Strategy, particularly by strengthening transparency in public finance, improving access to information, reinforcing accountability in local governance and promoting integrity within political and electoral processes.

TI Zimbabwe also called on Government to continue strengthening anti-corruption institutions, urged Parliament to expedite passage of the whistle-blower legislation, and encouraged political parties to embrace greater transparency in campaign financing and fundraising. It further appealed to the private sector, civil society, the media and citizens to play an active role in exposing corruption and promoting ethical leadership.

The organisation said corruption continues to undermine economic development, weaken public institutions and divert scarce resources away from essential public services, arguing that stronger integrity systems are essential if African countries are to achieve the goals set out under Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Whistle-blowers play a critical role in exposing corruption, fraud and abuse of public resources. Transparency International Zimbabwe has called for the urgent enactment of the Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill to strengthen legal protections for individuals who report corruption.
Photo Credit: AI-generated illustration





China Recognition Elevates Zimbabwe's Tourism Ambitions Worldwide

By Tsitsi Ndabambi

Zimbabwe's growing partnership with China has received a major boost after the country won the Gold Award in the Internet and Media Category at the 2026 Chinese Tourist Welcome (CTW) Awards, presented by the China Outbound Tourism Research Institute.

The international honour strongly shows the success of Zimbabwe's efforts to strengthen its presence in China's lucrative outbound tourism market through strategic digital engagement and targeted destination promotion. It also reflects the deepening tourism cooperation between the

two countries, with innovative campaigns which help to position Zimbabwe among the most attractive African destinations for Chinese travellers.

A key contributor to the award was the implementation of an extensive Key Opinion Leader (KOL) campaign, which enlisted influential Chinese travel creators to document and share their experiences across Zimbabwe. Their content, distributed on leading Chinese social media platforms including Douyin, WeChat and Xiaohongshu, introduced millions of users to the country's wildlife, landscapes, culture and hospitality.

Zimbabwe also broke new ground with the Victoria Falls China High-Speed Rail advertorial campaign, which promoted the country's flagship tourism attraction throughout China's vast rail system. The initiative reached hundreds of millions of commuters, providing unprecedented exposure for Zimbabwe in one of the world's largest travel markets.

The recognition demonstrates how strategic



collaboration with Chinese media platforms and digital influencers can deliver tangible results in destination marketing. By embracing technology-driven promotion and culturally relevant storytelling, Zimbabwe has expanded its visibility and inspired

greater interest among Chinese travellers seeking authentic international experiences.

The award is expected to further strengthen tourism ties between Zimbabwe and China while enhancing

opportunities for increased visitor arrivals, investment and long-term co-operation in the travel sector. It also reinforces Zimbabwe's reputation as a destination that is successfully adapting to the changing dynamics of global tourism marketing.



Govt targets diaspora investment

Itai Mazire

Government has officially opened a new investment front targeting its diaspora community, with the inaugural Zimbabwe Diaspora Investment and Business Opportunities Forum concluding in Melbourne on Friday evening, as the government seeks to leverage expatriate capital to accelerate growth in the country's tourism sector.

The three-day forum, hosted at Melbourne's Convention Centre, saw a 15-member Zimbabwean delegation led by Tourism and Hospitality Industry Minister Hon. Barbara Rwodzi present a comprehensive investment portfolio to over 200 Zimbabwean professionals, entrepreneurs, and business leaders based in Australia and New Zealand.

Tourism now contributes 10 percent to Zimbabwe's Gross Domestic Product in the first quarter of 2026, according to official figures presented at the forum, a figure the government aims to double by 2030 through aggressive

diaspora engagement and foreign direct investment targeting the sector's diverse value chain.

"We are not here to ask for handouts, we are here to present bankable projects with clear returns, and we believe our diaspora is ready to partner with us in building a tourism economy that benefits everyone," Hon. Rwodzi told delegates during her keynote address.

The delegation included Ambassador to Australia J.T. Mhishi, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority officials, Mosi-Oa-Tunya Development Company representatives, Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency executives, and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe technocrats, assembled under a Whole-of-Government Approach to streamline investment processes.

Key investment opportunities showcased included hotel and lodge development along the Victoria Falls-Matabeleland corridor, eco-tourism ventures in the Eastern Highlands, cultural tourism infrastructure at Great Zimbabwe Monument, and gastrono-

my tourism initiatives championed by Tourism Patron and First Lady Dr Auxillia Mnangagwa.

"The diaspora has already demonstrated their commitment through remittances exceeding USD 1 billion annually. Our message today is simple: there are far greater returns waiting for you through direct investment and we have removed the bureaucratic barriers that once stood in your way," she said.

The forum addressed persistent concerns among diaspora investors regarding policy consistency, currency stability and repatriation of profits, with ZIDA and RBZ officials providing detailed briefings on recent reforms, including the introduction of the Zimbabwe Gold currency and streamlined one-stop investment licensing.

A high-level business matching session connected diaspora investors with local tourism operators, while the Ministry announced the forthcoming establishment of a Diaspora Tourism Investment Desk to facilitate

continued engagement beyond the forum.

The event concluded with a Gastronomy Dinner featuring traditional Zimbabwean cuisine, providing a networking platform where informal commitments worth an estimated USD 50 million were reportedly discussed, though officials declined to confirm final figures pending due diligence.

Ambassador Mhishi described the forum as "a game-changer" in bilateral economic relations, noting that Australia hosts an estimated 80 000 Zimbabweans, many of whom hold senior positions in finance, technology, and real estate sectors.

"We have lit the fire, now it is up to our diaspora to fuel it. Zimbabwe is open for business, and tourism is our most bankable asset," said Hon.



Tourism and Hospitality Industry Minister Hon. Barbara Rwodzi

Rwodzi said in her closing remarks.

The Ministry confirmed that similar forums are being planned for the United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States in the coming financial year as part of a sustained diaspora investment mobilization strategy.



Zimbabwe's rich wildlife heritage is reflected in this collection of iconic species, including the African elephant, southern yellow-billed hornbill, greater kudu and plains zebra, all thriving in the country's protected conservation areas. These species highlight the importance of sustainable wildlife management in preserving Zimbabwe's biodiversity for future generations.

Photos: Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks).

A New Dawn for Air Zimbabwe

...Air Zimbabwe's Return to London

Opinion by Itai Mazire

The announcement that Air Zimbabwe will resume direct flights between Harare and London by July 2026 is far more than a simple route restoration.

It is a powerful and symbolic victory for Zimbabwe's Engagement and Re-engagement Policy, a testament to the country's resilience and a concrete step toward its economic revival.

At the heart of this landmark achievement is the Mutapa Investment Fund (MIF), Zimbabwe's sovereign wealth fund, which has orchestrated a remarkable turnaround for the national carrier, pulling it from the brink of collapse and positioning it for a confident return to the skies.

After nearly 15 years of absence, the national flag carrier is re-establishing a vital air bridge to one of the world's most significant financial and tourism hubs, solidifying Zimbabwe's position as a nation that is open, stable and ready for business.

This is not just a win for connectivity it is a major coup for trade, tourism and national pride, made possible by disciplined institutional reform and the visionary leadership that established the MIF as a vehicle for safeguarding national assets and driving economic transformation.

The significance of this development is enhanced by the meticulous preparation and strategic partnerships that have made it possible.

Air Zimbabwe has confirmed that direct services between Harare and London Gatwick will commence on July 22, 2026, operating three times a week on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

This marks the carrier's first return to the UK market since it suspended operations in 2011/2012 due to financial and operational challenges.

The mechanics of this relaunch are a masterclass in pragmatic problem-solving.

Air Zimbabwe will utilise a leased Airbus A330-300 aircraft from the Spanish airline Plus Ultra Líneas Aéreas, under an Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance, and Insurance (ACMI) or "wet-lease" agreement.

This arrangement, expertly facilitated by aviation specialist Chapman Freeborn, is a strategic masterstroke.

It allows the national carrier to circumvent the logistical and regulatory hurdles of operating its own aged fleet, leveraging an EU-certified operator to restart a critically strategic long-haul route, especially given Air Zimbabwe's current status on the EU Air Safety List.

The 302-seat Airbus, with 30 Business Class and 272 Economy seats, will not only carry passengers but also re-establish a crucial cargo link for time-sensitive exports.

Central to this resurgence is the Mutapa Investment Fund, which has provided the professional oversight and

structured turnaround framework that eluded the airline for decades.

The MIF, established through Statutory Instrument 156 of 2023 and managed by CEO Dr John Mangudya, has absorbed the liabilities of state-owned enterprises like Air Zimbabwe and implemented strict performance and accountability standards.

This shift has enabled the formulation of a credible five-year strategic plan, which includes the ambitious acquisition of six new aircraft at a total cost of USD 775.5 million.

The plan details two domestic aircraft, two regional jets and crucially, two long-haul wide-body jets intended to restore direct international connectivity.

Furthermore, the MIF has authorized the sale of two Boeing 777 aircraft acquired from Malaysia Airlines but never commercially utilized, with proceeds financing new, smaller aircraft for domestic routes.

This comprehensive restructuring, which also includes strategic alliances and capital mobilization, is a direct outcome of the government's National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) and demonstrates that disciplined reform, underpinned by visionary leadership, can reverse years of decline and restore strategic national assets.

This achievement is the direct result of President Emmerson Mnangagwa's Engagement and Re-engagement Policy, which is systematically bearing

fruit.

The re-establishment of this air link is a tangible outcome of a broader strategy to rebuild Zimbabwe's global ties and shed its pariah image.

The government's commitment to modernising the aviation sector, as highlighted by Vice President Kembo Mohadi and Transport Minister Felix Mhona, has been critical.

This includes securing a foreign operator permit from the UK Civil Aviation Authority, a rigorous process that demonstrates the nation's growing prominence as a renewed and reliable partner.

As Hon. Mhona reiterated, Zimbabwe is committed to global aviation standards and has been modernising its infrastructure, including the expansion of the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport to accommodate significantly higher traffic volumes.

The economic dividends of this route are immense and multi-faceted.

For the diaspora, it provides an affordable and direct link home, with promotional fares starting from as low as £490 one-way or £675 return.

For the tourism sector, which contributes roughly 12% of GDP, these flights are a game-changer, providing direct access for thousands of tourists to destinations like Victoria Falls and Harare.

However, it is the boost to trade that is

most transformative.

The cargo capacity on the A330-300 will allow Zimbabwean exporters to get fresh produce, horticulture and manufactured goods to UK and EU markets faster than ever before, reducing costs, increasing export earnings, and creating jobs across the agricultural and logistics value chains.

More visitors plus more exports equals more foreign currency to support healthcare, education and infrastructure development.

This is proof that re-engagement is working, not just as a political slogan, but as a powerful engine for economic growth, vindicating the President's economic foresight and the strategic establishment of the Mutapa Investment Fund.

As Zimbabwe reclaims its aviation sovereignty, more routes and more investment will inevitably follow as global confidence in the nation continues to soar.

The message is clear, Zimbabwe under the Second Republic is honoring its obligations, fixing its institutions, and attracting partners who believe in its future.

The return of the national flag to London's skies is not merely a flight path, it is a flight path to prosperity, dignity, and a reimagined Zimbabwe that stands tall among the community of nations.



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Cotton Research Institute Unveils High-Yielding Varieties at 101st Anniversary Field Day

By Hurumende News Desk

The Cotton Research Institute (CRI) has unveiled a new generation of Zimbabwe-bred, open-pollinated cotton varieties capable of producing between 30 and 35 bales per hectare or more, offering renewed hope for the revival of the country's cotton industry.

The breakthrough varieties were showcased during the institute's 101st anniversary Field Day held at Chitekete in Gokwe, where researchers highlighted advances in yield potential, lint quality and adaptability under Zimbabwean growing conditions.

Speaking at the event, CRI Director Mr. Mubvekeri said the improved varieties are the result of decades of breeding work supported by Zimbabwe's broad cotton genetic base, complemented by new germplasm sourced from Asia and the Americas.

He said the new breeding material has significantly improved key production traits, including lint quality, bale weight and boll numbers, while maintaining wide adaptability across different cotton-growing regions.

Mr. Mubvekeri said that with good agronomic management, the new varieties have the potential to restore profitability to cotton production and strengthen the competitiveness of Zimbabwe's cotton sector.

Although the varieties have demonstrated exceptional performance in research trials, he noted that farmers will have to wait for them to become commercially available because they must first pass through the formal seed multiplication system.

Under the process, nuclear seed is first



Officials and farmers inspect high-yielding cotton plots during the Cotton Research Institute's 101st anniversary Field Day at Chitekete, Gokwe, where newly developed Zimbabwe-bred cotton varieties were showcased.

multiplied into breeder seed before being supplied to seed companies for large-scale bulking ahead of commercial distribution.

Mr. Mubvekeri said several seed companies are already multiplying recently released varieties, CRIMS 3 to CRIMS 8, to ensure adequate seed supplies

for future farmer uptake. The institute said the continued development of improved, locally bred cotton varieties forms part of broader

efforts to increase productivity, improve farmer incomes and support the recovery of Zimbabwe's cotton value chain.

Higher Yields Now Priority in Winter Wheat Programme



By Shyline Majaji

The Government has shifted its focus from expanding winter wheat hectarage to maximising productivity after farmers exceeded the national planting target of 125 000 hectares, marking another milestone in Zimba-

bwe's drive towards food security and self-sufficiency.

The strategic shift was announced by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development, Prof. Dr. Obert Jiri, during winter wheat crop assessments at Ceres Farm in Shamva.

Prof. Jiri said the emphasis is now on achieving higher yields through improved crop management practices rather than increasing the area under cultivation.

"Our priority is now to maximise productivity from the planted crop through sound agronomic practices, efficient irrigation, optimal fertiliser use and effective pest and disease management," he said.

Zimbabwe is targeting 662 500 metric tonnes of wheat from the 2025 winter cropping season, a production level expected to consolidate the country's wheat self-sufficiency and strengthen national food security.

The shift in strategy comes as the Government continues implementing measures to enhance agricultural productivity through improved extension services, irrigation development and adoption of climate-smart farming practices.

The new approach complements the Ministry's recently launched Dual-Strategy Framework for ENSO Risk Management in Cropping Systems, which promotes proactive and reactive measures to build resilience against climate-related shocks.

The framework advocates early warning systems, climate-smart agriculture and pre-season planning to minimise the impacts of El Niño and La Niña events, while providing co-ordinated emergency response and recovery mechanisms when adverse weather occurs.

The government says the integrated approach will ensure sustained agricultural production despite increasing climate variability by combining improved farm management with climate risk management.

The winter wheat programme remains a key pillar of Zimbabwe's Agriculture Food Systems and Rural Transformation Strategy as the country seeks to maintain national grain reserves, reduce wheat imports and secure sustainable food production.

Permanent Secretary Prof. Dr. Obert Jiri inspects winter wheat at Ceres Farm in Shamva, where he said Government's focus has shifted to maximising yields after farmers exceeded the 125 000-hectare planting target. (Picture credit: Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development.)

Climate Preparedness Takes Centre Stage in New Agricultural Framework

By Shyline Majaji

The Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development has introduced a Dual-Strategy Framework for ENSO Risk Management in Cropping Systems, a comprehensive approach designed to strengthen Zimbabwe's resilience to climate shocks while safeguarding food security and rural livelihoods.

The framework integrates proactive interventions before the agricultural season with reactive measures during and after climate-induced shocks associated with El Niño and La Niña events.

Under the proactive pillar, emphasis is placed on reducing risks through pre-season vulnerability assessments, planning and preparedness, climate-smart agriculture (CSA), and early warning systems. The approach encourages farmers to use drought-tolerant seed, diversify cropping systems, practise soil and water conservation, adopt agroforestry and make informed planting decisions based on seasonal climate forecasts. The Ministry says timely dissemination of weather and climate advisories through SMS, radio, mobile applications and extension services will enable farmers to prepare for adverse weather conditions before they occur. The framework identifies El Niño and La Niña events as major drivers of

droughts, floods, heat stress and pest and disease outbreaks that often result in crop failure, food insecurity and loss of household incomes.

To minimise these impacts, the reactive component provides a coordinated response once disasters occur. It includes rapid impact assessments,

emergency provision of food, seed and agricultural inputs, safe water, livestock feed and disease control, as well as social protection measures

such as cash transfers, public works programmes and protection of productive assets.

Recovery efforts also focus on rebuilding livelihoods through restocking, rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure, market support and strengthening communities to "build back better." The framework further promotes continuous learning through monitoring and evaluation, documentation of lessons learnt, updating climate risk knowledge, strengthening agricultural systems and improving preparedness for future seasons.

Supporting the strategy are several cross-cutting enablers, including climate services and data, inclusive governance and coordination, finance and risk transfer mechanisms, gender and social inclusion, private sector participation, market development, and communication and community engagement.

By combining anticipatory action with timely emergency response, the Ministry aims to reduce disaster losses, protect agricultural production and build a more resilient farming sector capable of withstanding increasingly frequent climate extremes.

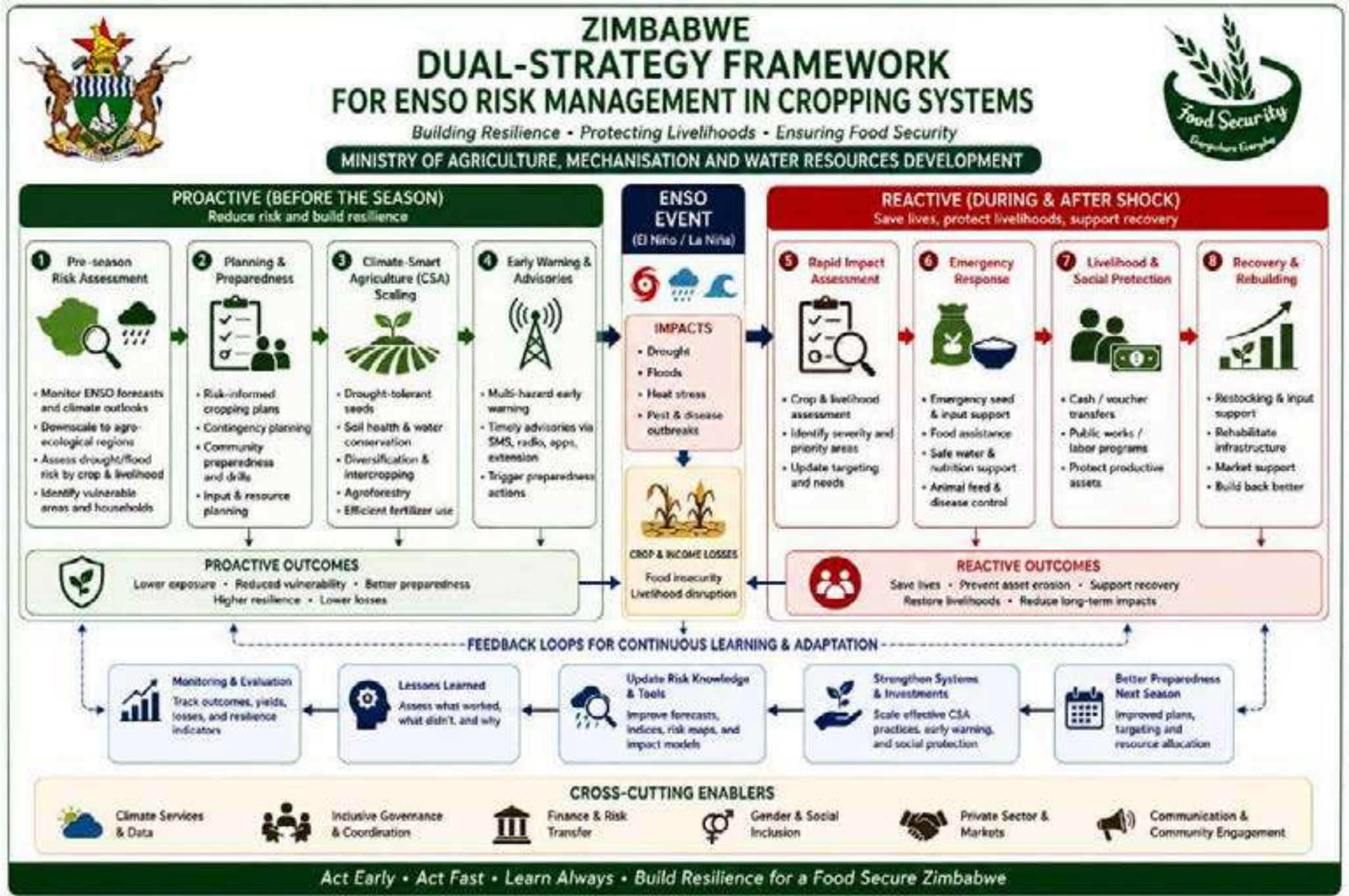
The framework reinforces Zimbabwe's commitment to acting early, responding quickly and continuously improving climate risk management to ensure sustainable agricultural production and national food security.

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Supporting the strategy are several cross-cutting enablers, including climate services and data, inclusive governance and coordination, finance and risk transfer mechanisms, gender and social inclusion, private sector participation, market development, and communication and community engagement.

The Ministry's Dual-Strategy Framework for ENSO Risk Management outlines proactive measures before the farming season and coordinated response mechanisms during and after El Niño and La Niña shocks to strengthen food security and climate resilience in Zimbabwe. (Graphic: Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development.)





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Zanorashe Takes Flight

By Tsitsi Ndabambi

The audience held their breath before the first model appeared. Then, like something remembered rather than rehearsed, the show began and everyone watched a decade of silent work finally step into the light.

For ten years, designer Tatenda Chidzidzi built Zanorashe in the way most enduring things are built, privately, patiently, and without fanfare. This week, that changed. At The Hive outdoor gardens it became a runway show and a special homecoming, Chidzidzi officially launched her label to the world with a single collection accompanied by a full sensory reckoning of what it means to create from the Zimbabwean soil.

The show was themed "Flight, Fall, Freedom: Reimagining Zimbabwe's Birds of Paradise". Fashion, poetry, visual arts, live music and architecture were woven together into one continuous narrative, transforming the presentation into something closer to cultural testimony than a trade showcase. By the time the last model turned, Zanorashe had positioned herself as a brand fluent in two languages at once, deeply Zimbabwean, and unmistakably global.

The architect behind this immersive framing was Beverly Sekete, founder of the curatorial platform Sankora. She opened the evening without pleasantries, but with a challenge. "We are at a time when our country often tells us that it is difficult to be a creative, to start a business and that it is hard to show up," Sekete told the gathered guests. "I want to remind you that it is not. In fact, this is precisely the moment when we must defy the odds." It was a statement of intent as much as an introduction. Sekete described Sankora's role as one of cultural excavation, looking back so that we can bring forward what is valuable and what must never be forgotten" and that philosophy shaped each decision in the space. Guests were encouraged to notice the venue's stonework, its architectural bones, its natural surroundings, all deliberately folded into the show's meaning. The models themselves were reimagined as birds returning home after long journeys, figures of belonging, renewal, and the quiet power of reconnecting with one's roots. "In an ecosystem that is Zimbabwean, British-Swiss and truly intercontinental," Sekete said, "Tatenda is taking this collection beyond borders. This is an important milestone, one worthy of celebration."

If Sekete supplied the framework, it was Ayana Nyemba Chidzidzi's daughter who gave the evening its heartbeat. Her original spoken-word piece opened the collection with imagery that lingered long after the last line was spoken, likening the Zimbabwe's iconic Bird of Paradise flower to its people and its creatives: shaped by hardship and displacement, yet stubborn in their determination to bloom. "Yet the earth is not a graveyard," she declared. "It is a womb." She spoke of hardship transmuted into craft, of loss reshaped into material, struggle reshaped into form: "Every tear became a stitch. Every setback became another thread." By the time she closed, calling the collection "more than an evolution" and "more than a collection of garments," everyone understood that this was never simply about clothing,



As Nyemba put it, it was "a survival testimony. A proof that no matter how deep the soil, no matter how great the pressure, creation will always find a way to bloom."

For Chidzidzi, the night carried a weight that had been building for a decade. "It has been ten years since I created Zanorashe, and in all that time, I have never officially launched the brand," she told her guests, her voice

carrying the particular vulnerability of someone finally letting a private world become public. "I have never allowed myself to be this vulnerable or to share my work in the way I have today." She spoke of fashion not as commerce but as a confession, one of the rawest forms of self-disclosure a creative can offer. "As creatives, I believe the most intimate part of ourselves is our art," she said. "It is a vulnerable thing to stand before people and simply say, 'Look at me. This is who I am.'" It was a rare moment of candor from a designer whose work has always spoken loudly, even when she herself has not.

Chidzidzi's path to this night wound through Malaysia, where she studied, and Berlin, where she completed her master's degree, before returning to root her practice firmly in the Zimbabwean soil. Over the years, Zanorashe has become known for a distinctive fusion, contemporary silhouettes built on a foundation of sustainable fashion, local craftsmanship, and unapologetic African identity, all shaped to remain as wearable as they are symbolic. The brand calls its guiding philosophy "Haute Culture" an evolving African identity that honours tradition while pushing boldly into innovation. Its emblematic mask captures that duality: an image rooted firmly in the present, yet already leaning toward the future.

That future-facing spirit extended to the show's other collaborators. Artist Ishmael Marimirofa contributed sculptural works crafted from recycled materials, pieces that explored memory and resilience by finding value in objects the world had already discarded a visual echo of the evening's central



argument that beauty so often emerges from adversity, not in spite of it. Chidzidzi closed the night with gratitude — for Sekete, for her creative team, her models, and her supporters, among them Tagive Investments, the British Council, the Embassy of Switzerland, House of Stone Showroom, and The Diplomat.

What made the day resonate beyond its guest list was Sekete's insistence, through Sankora, that African heri-

tage be treated as living knowledge something still being written rather than as history sealed behind glass. It was this idea, more than any single garment, that gave the show its lasting charge. Zanorashe did not simply launch a fashion label this week. It announced a movement, one where fashion, poetry, art, and memory intersect to tell contemporary African stories with confidence, authenticity, and unmistakable global relevance.



Meet Lewis Mataya:

The Zimbabwean Fighter Taking on the World

By Hurumende Sports Desk

Lewis Mataya knows what it means to fight long before stepping into a mixed martial arts cage.

For Zimbabwe's rising MMA star, every victory has been earned through battles that began far away from bright lights and cheering crowds. His journey has been shaped by loss, sacrifice, resilience and an unwavering belief that no setback is too great to overcome.

Today, Mataya is one of Zimbabwe's most accomplished mixed martial artists, carrying the nation's flag onto continental and international stages while inspiring a new generation of young athletes to believe that success is possible regardless of where they come from.

His rise has been anything but conventional.

Before discovering mixed martial arts, Mataya built his reputation in taekwondo, where his athleticism and discipline quickly became apparent. But it was MMA—with its combination of striking, wrestling and grappling—that gave him the platform to test every aspect of himself.

That gamble paid off.

Mataya made history by becoming Zimbabwe's first African mixed martial arts champion after winning gold at the IMMAF Africa Championships, announcing himself as one of the continent's brightest talents.

Yet medals tell only part of his story.



Away from competition, Mataya has spoken candidly about growing up as an orphan, facing financial hardship and navigating obstacles that would have ended many sporting careers before they began.

Instead of allowing those experiences to define him, he turned them into fuel.

His determination eventually took him to South Africa, where he pursued his dream of competing professionally against stronger opposition and developing into a world-class fighter.

His journey, however, was not without fresh adversity.

Mataya has publicly shared how he was wrongfully imprisoned in South Africa—an experience he describes as one of the darkest periods of his life. Rather than abandoning his ambitions, he emerged with renewed purpose, determined to prove that resilience is often forged during life's most difficult moments.

Inside the cage, Mataya is known for his composure, explosive striking and relentless work ethic.

Outside it, he is equally passionate about building opportunities for others.

He has launched initiatives aimed at introducing mixed martial arts to disadvantaged young Zimbabweans, believing the sport can become a pathway away from poverty, crime and unemployment.

For Mataya, MMA is about far more than winning titles.

It is about discipline, confidence and giving young people the belief that they can rewrite their own stories.

As mixed martial arts continues to grow across Africa, Zimbabwe has begun producing athletes capable of competing with the continent's best.

Mataya believes the country has the talent to produce world champions, provided fighters receive the support, facilities and sponsorship they need.

His ambitions now stretch far beyond continental success.

The ultimate goal is to compete on the world's biggest stages and show that Zimbabwean athletes can stand shoulder to shoulder with the sport's elite.

For a fighter who has overcome personal tragedy, financial hardship and countless obstacles, the next challenge is simply another opponent waiting on the other side of the cage.

And if Lewis Mataya's journey has shown anything, it is that he has never been afraid of a fight.



Dynamos Secure Nathan Mutasa on Loan from Scotland

By Hurumende Sports Desk

Dynamos FC have bolstered their squad ahead of the second half of the season after securing the services of Scotland FC forward Nathan Mutasa on a loan deal.

The move, confirmed by football sources, sees the talented attacker swap Scotland for the Glamour Boys in search of regular first-team football.

Mutasa struggled for consistent game time at Scotland, where competition for places has been intense in the club's well-resourced squad. The loan

move is expected to provide the forward with an opportunity to revive his season and showcase his abilities at one of Zimbabwe's biggest football clubs.

The transfer also hands Mutasa the chance to feature in the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup, with Dynamos set to compete on the continental stage.

Dynamos have been strengthening their squad as they prepare for both domestic and continental assignments, with the addition of Mutasa expected to add depth and attacking

options.

For the 22-year-old forward, the move presents an opportunity to establish himself with regular playing time while helping DeMbare pursue success in the Premier Soccer League and CAF Confederation Cup.

The Glamour Boys' supporters will now be hoping Mutasa can rediscover the form that made him one of the country's promising young attacking talents as Dynamos look to challenge on multiple fronts this season.



EFA Wants CAF to Expand Champions League, Confederation Cup Slots

By Next Level Sports

The Egyptian Football Association (EFA) has formally requested the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to increase the number of clubs participating in its flagship inter-club competitions, arguing that greater continental competition will accelerate the development of African football.

The proposal, submitted on Thursday and confirmed by EFA president Hany Abo Rida, seeks to increase the allocation for Africa's top 12 ranked leagues from two teams to three in both the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League and the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup.

Under the current CAF system, the continent's 12 highest-ranked leagues each enter two clubs in both competitions, while all other member associations are represented by one team in each tournament.

If approved, the proposal would also see lower-ranked leagues receive an additional berth, increasing their representation from one to two teams in both competitions.

Rida said expanding the competitions would expose more clubs to high-level continental football, helping improve the standard of the game across

Africa.

He argued that the continent's improved performances at the ongoing FIFA World Cup demonstrate the benefits of increased competition and that broadening participation in CAF competitions would further strengthen African football.

CAF has yet to respond publicly to the proposal.

The current top 12 associations eligible to enter two clubs in each competition include Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, Algeria, Tunisia, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia and Nigeria.

For countries outside the top 12—including Zimbabwe—the proposal could represent a significant opportunity if CAF extends additional places to lower-ranked member associations.

Zimbabwe currently enters one club in the CAF Champions League and one in the CAF Confederation Cup each season. An expanded allocation would give more local clubs the chance to compete on the continental stage, increasing exposure, attracting sponsorship opportunities and providing valuable experience against Africa's elite teams.

The proposal is expected to be considered by CAF's executive structures, although no timeline has been announced for a decision. If adopted, the changes would mark one of the biggest expansions of African club football in recent years, potentially opening the door for more clubs across the continent to compete at the highest level.

PSL Week 22: Stalemates Tighten Race as Simba Bhora Keep Their Foot on the Gas

Castle Lager Premier Soccer League Week 22 produced a mixture of cagey encounters and crucial victories, with the biggest winners arguably being Simba Bhora, whose 2-0 victory over Bulawayo Chiefs strengthened their position at the top of the table.

While several title contenders dropped points, Simba Bhora took full advantage, underlining the consistency that has defined their campaign. At this stage of the season, turning home fixtures into maximum points is what separates champions from challengers, and Simba Bhora did exactly that.

At Mandava Stadium, FC Platinum and Highlanders shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in what was expected to be one of the weekend's headline fixtures. The result does little to signifi-

cantly boost either side's ambitions, with both clubs likely to feel they left points on the pitch.

Caps United's goalless draw against Ngezi Platinum at Rufaro Stadium continued Makepekepe's struggle to consistently convert home advantage into victories. While the clean sheet offers some encouragement, another draw leaves supporters asking where the goals will come from as the season enters its decisive phase.

At Nyamhunga Stadium, ZPC Kariba and newcomers FC Hunters settled for a 1-1 draw, with both sides earning a point but neither making a significant leap up the standings.

The biggest upset of the day came in Bulawayo, where Chicken Inn edged

Manica Diamonds 2-1. The victory gives the Gamecocks valuable momentum and could prove significant in their push up the table, while Manica Diamonds will rue another missed opportunity to strengthen their position.

With only a handful of matches remaining, every point has become increasingly valuable. The title race remains finely balanced, while the battle for continental qualification and survival promises an equally dramatic finish.

If Week 22 proved anything, it is that consistency—not reputation—will determine who celebrates when the curtain falls on the 2026 Castle Lager Premier Soccer League season.

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AS THE WORLD CUP NARROWS, Greatness Comes Into Focus

By Next Level Sport

There is a moment in every FIFA World Cup when the noise begins to fade. The colorful spectacle of the opening weeks gives way to something more intense, more unforgiving. The packed stadiums still pulse with song, millions remain glued to their screens, and entire nations continue to dream—but now every pass, every decision, and every fleeting lapse carries consequences measured not in points, but in history.

That moment has arrived.

The 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup has entered the quarterfinal stage, where reputations are tested as fiercely as tactics, and where champions are separated from contenders by the smallest of margins. The expanded tournament has delivered its share of surprises, introducing new heroes and reminding the football world that no nation, however decorated, is immune to an inspired opponent. Yet as the field narrows, familiar powers are once again asserting themselves with

the calm confidence that only experience can provide.

France marched into the semifinals with a performance that reflected both maturity and efficiency, overcoming a spirited Moroccan side through disciplined defending and clinical finishing. Spain followed with a hard-earned victory over Belgium, demonstrating once again that patience, precision, and technical excellence remain among football's most potent weapons. Neither victory was flamboyant; both carried the unmistakable stamp of teams that understand how World Cups are truly won—not through spectacle alone, but through control, resilience, and an unwavering belief

in their identity.

The story, however, is far from complete.

The remaining quarterfinals promise fresh chapters in a tournament that

prepares for another examination of its championship credentials against a disciplined Swiss team determined to extend its own historic run. Each fixture offers more than a place in the semifinals. It presents an opportunity to shape a nation's sporting legacy.

in defence, and seizing the decisive moment when it appears.

Perhaps that is what makes the World Cup unlike any other sporting event. It compresses decades of ambition into ninety minutes, where the fortunes of a nation can pivot on a single save, a perfectly timed tackle, or one unforgettable strike. Every knockout match becomes a story that will be retold for generations, its heroes immortalized and its heartbreaks woven into football folklore.

As the road to the final grows shorter, anticipation grows stronger. The margins will become finer, the pressure heavier, and the moments even more precious. Somewhere within the matches still to be played lies the performance that will define this World Cup—the display of courage, composure, or brilliance that transforms gifted footballers into legends.

Until then, the world watches, waits, and wonders who will write the final chapter of football's greatest story.

The 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup has entered the quarterfinal stage, where reputations are tested as fiercely as tactics, and where champions are separated from contenders by the smallest of margins. The expanded tournament has delivered its share of surprises, introducing new heroes and reminding the football world that no nation, however decorated, is immune to an inspired opponent. Yet as the field narrows, familiar powers are once again asserting themselves with the calm confidence that only experience can provide.

has continually defied prediction. England faces a fearless Norway side whose remarkable campaign has become one of the competition's defining narratives, while Argentina

outsiders to challenge the established order. Success has belonged not only to those blessed with superstar talent but also to those capable of adapting under pressure, remaining organized

