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GOVT ALLOCATES OVER K2.2 MILLION TO REVISED CASH FOR WORK PROGRAMME IN MANSA

By Money Daily Reporter



Government has allocated K2.2 million to Mansa District for the implementation of the Revised Cash for Work (CFW) Programme for July 2026, with 3,479 vulnerable residents expected to benefit from the initiative.

According to a statement issued by Mansa Municipal Council, the funding underscores Government's commitment to strengthening social protection while promoting community participation in labour-intensive public works.

Council Public Relations Officer, Norman Kashi said the programme will provide temporary income support to vulnerable households while facilitating the development, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure and community assets.

Mr. Kashi disclosed that recruitment of beneficiaries will take place in their respective wards from July 13 to 15, followed by a two-day verification exercise to validate the eligibility of selected participants and ensure transparency, accountability and fairness in the implementation of the programme.

He added that successful applicants will undertake community works from July 18 to 27.

“During this period, participants will undertake approved labour-intensive public works such as environmental cleaning, drainage maintenance, road reserve clearing and other community improvement activities aimed at enhancing public infrastructure and sanitation,” he said.

Mr. Kashi urged eligible residents to present themselves for recruitment in their respective wards within the stipulated period and cooperate fully during the verification exercise.

He also appealed to members of the public to support the programme by ensuring that only deserving and eligible beneficiaries are considered.

“The Council remains committed to implementing the Revised Cash for Work Programme in a transparent, efficient and accountable manner in line with Government guidelines, ensuring that the intended beneficiaries receive the much-needed support while contributing to sustainable community development,” Mr. Kashi added.

The Cash for Work Programme is Government’s flagship social protection initiative, designed to provide temporary employment to vulnerable households through labour-intensive public works.

The initiative was introduced as part of the Government's emergency response to the severe 2023/2024 drought, which President Hakainde Hichilema declared a National Disaster and Emergency on February 29, 2024.

Initially rolled out in 123 constituencies across 87 drought-affected districts, the programme has since been expanded under the Revised Cash for Work Programme to cover all 156 constituencies in Zambia's 116 districts, including Mansa District.

ZAMBIA REAFFIRMS FOOD SAFETY, BEEF EXPORT AMBITIONS AT CODEX COMMISSION MEETING IN SWITZERLAND

By Money Daily Reporter



Zambia is country's livestock participating in the 49th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49) in Geneva, Switzerland, as part of efforts to strengthen the country's food safety systems and expand access to international markets for livestock and other foods of animal origin.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock is being represented at the global meeting by Senior Veterinary Officer, Dr. Maputa Kamulete and Veterinary Research Officer, Dr. Leonard Malama Sampa.

According to the Ministry, Zambia's participation underscores government's commitment to improving compliance with internationally recognized food safety standards while enhancing the competitiveness of the country's livestock sector.

Principal Public Relations Officer, Benny Munyama said the Codex Alimentarius Commission is the world's leading international body responsible for developing harmonized food standards, guidelines and codes of practice aimed at protecting consumer health and facilitating fair trade in food.

Mr. Munyama stated that Zambia’s participation in the meeting provides an opportunity to contribute to the development of international food standards while strengthening the country's capacity to comply with globally recognized food safety requirements.

“The outcomes of CAC49 are expected to enhance Zambia's compliance with international sanitary and food safety standards, improve market access for livestock products, and support government's target of achieving US\$1 billion in annual beef exports by 2031,” he said.

He reaffirmed the Ministry’s commitment to strengthening food safety systems, promoting quality assurance across the livestock value chain, and positioning Zambia's livestock sector to compete effectively in regional and international markets.

The 49th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is being held in Geneva, Switzerland, bringing together member countries to deliberate on international food standards that safeguard consumer health and promote fair practices in global food trade.

AAAZ URGES GOVT TO PUBLISH ESTIMATED BENEFICIARY NUMBERS ALONGSIDE BUDGET RELEASES

By Cecilia Chiluba

Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia (AAAZ) has called on the Government to complement future budget releases with estimated beneficiary numbers.

The call follows the Government's recent release of K49.1 billion towards public service delivery, social protection, infrastructure development and community development.

AAAZ Communications Officer, Melbourne Mushitu, said greater transparency should include not only how much money is allocated but also who is expected to benefit from the expenditure.

Ms. Mushitu emphasized that future announcements should indicate the estimated number of vulnerable households expected to benefit from the Social Cash Transfer Programme and the Food Security Pack Programme, the number of citizens expected to benefit from the procurement of essential medicines and medical supplies, as well as the number of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects and communities expected to benefit from the allocations.

"While we commend the Government for prioritizing these investments, AAAZ believes that transparency should extend beyond announcing financial allocations. Citizens also deserve to know the expected impact of these public investments," she said.

She noted that providing such information would strengthen transparency, enable citizens to monitor whether public resources are reaching their intended beneficiaries, and promote greater accountability in the management of public finances.

Ms. Mushitu added that publishing estimated beneficiary figures would also provide measurable benchmarks for citizens, civil society organizations and oversight institutions to assess whether public investments are delivering improved healthcare, stronger social protection, enhanced food security, quality local infrastructure and other intended development outcomes.

She further encouraged the Government to provide periodic public updates on the implementation of the allocations, including progress made, beneficiaries reached and results achieved.

"Transparent reporting on both expenditure and outcomes is essential to building public confidence, enhancing value for money, and ensuring that every public investment contributes meaningfully to national development," Ms. Mushitu added.

Ms. Mushitu reiterated that public resources achieve their greatest value when accompanied by transparency, measurable outcomes and meaningful citizen participation throughout implementation.

She stated that by providing clear beneficiary targets and regular progress updates, the Government would further strengthen public trust and demonstrate that every Kwacha invested is making a tangible difference in the lives of Zambians.

Ms. Mushitu, however, said the organization welcomes the Government's release of K49.1 billion, describing the allocations as an important investment in improving citizens' well-being, protecting vulnerable households and advancing inclusive national development.

The funding includes K1.5 billion for the Social Cash Transfer Programme, K700 million for the procurement of essential medicines and medical supplies, K610 million for CDF projects, and K300 million for the Food Security Pack Programme, among other strategic investments aimed at strengthening service delivery and supporting national development.

"We particularly welcome the investment in essential medicines and medical supplies, which is critical to ensuring that public health facilities remain adequately stocked and that citizens, particularly those in underserved communities, have improved access to quality healthcare," she said.

"The continued financing of the Social Cash Transfer Programme and the Food Security Pack Programme is equally commendable, as these initiatives provide an important social safety net for vulnerable households, while CDF resources have the potential to accelerate development through improved infrastructure and local service delivery."

She added that the allocations demonstrate the Government's continued commitment to financing critical national priorities, particularly investments in healthcare, social protection and community development.

FRA FINALIZING MAIZE, RICE BUYING PRICES AHEAD OF 2026 CROP MARKETING SEASON

By Cecilia Chiluba



Food Reserve Agency (FRA) says it is undertaking extensive consultations with various stakeholders to determine the buying prices for maize and paddy rice for the 2026 crop marketing season.

Speaking at a media briefing, FRA Board Chairperson Suresh Desai said the buying prices will be announced once the consultation process is concluded.

Mr. Desai disclosed that the Agency has established 1,749 buying depot sites, which will be operationalized during the 2026 crop marketing season.

He further said FRA is fully prepared to begin purchasing maize, but the exercise has been delayed due to the high moisture content in newly harvested grain.

According to a recent survey, the highest recorded moisture content of newly harvested maize is 18.14 percent, while the lowest stands at 13.57 percent.

Mr. Desai explained that FRA will have to wait until the moisture content falls to the acceptable level before opening its depots for maize purchases.

"For long term storage, it is absolutely essential that the stored maize has a moisture level of 12.5% and below. If the moisture level is higher than this, the grain will spoil easily and even develop aflatoxins which are very dangerous to human and animal health," Mr. Desai stated.

He, however, noted that moisture levels are steadily declining and that the Agency will commence buying once the moisture content reaches 12.5 percent or below.

"The Agency is fully ready to commence the buying exercise. However, what is still holding us is the issue of moisture content of the harvested maize in the country. I am making a firm commitment that the Agency will commence intake of maize as soon as the moisture content levels drop to 12.5% or below," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Desai revealed that the FRA Board has directed management to ensure that all payments for maize and paddy rice purchases this year are made through a digital online payment system.

He said the move is intended to eliminate the long queues that farmers experienced under previous payment arrangements.

"This is being done to ensure that farmers don't suffer in the long queues which characterized our previous payment arrangement," Mr. Desai stated.

Mr. Desai also urged farmers to ensure they have active bank or mobile money accounts to facilitate payments, stressing that cash payments over the counter will not be made this year.

"Farmers must submit bank account or mobile money account details to our district offices. Many farmers have already submitted the above required details to our district offices," he noted.



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MQHZ CALLS FOR FAIR HEALTH WORKER RECRUITMENT, URGES ABANDONMENT OF DATABASE SYSTEM FOR 2026

By Money Daily Reporter



Medical for Quality Healthcare in Zambia (MQHZ) has called for a credible, fair and transparent health worker recruitment process by completely abandoning the database system in the 2026 exercise.

MQHZ’s call follows the recent announcement by the Civil Service Commission that advertisements for the recruitment of 2,600 health workers will be published on 14th July 2026.

Organization Director General Dr. Quince Mwabu told Money News that this year’s recruitment exercise presents an important opportunity for government to strengthen confidence in the health workforce system by

addressing concerns that emerged during the 2024 and 2025 recruitment processes.

Dr. Mwabu noted that during the previous recruitment exercises, health professionals and the public raised serious concerns regarding the use of the database system, inconsistencies in candidate selection, allegations of corruption and other irregularities.

“These concerns created uncertainty among qualified health professionals and raised questions about fairness, transparency and equal opportunity in the recruitment process,” Dr. Mwabu stated.

He emphasized that the selection of candidates must be conducted through a transparent, merit-based and accountable process

that can be trusted by health professionals and the Zambian public.

“MQHZ further believes that the Ministry of Health should lead the coordination of the recruitment process because it is the institution responsible for planning and managing Zambia’s health workforce. The Ministry understands the staffing gaps, professional requirements and service delivery priorities that must guide the recruitment of health workers,” Dr. Mwabu added.

Dr. Mwabu also urged government to consider the year of completion of training during this year’s recruitment process, as many qualified health professionals have remained unemployed for several years after completing their training despite meeting all professional requirements.

He said a fair recruitment system should recognize those who have waited the longest for an opportunity to serve the nation.

“At a time when many health facilities continue to experience shortages of essential health workers, Zambia cannot afford to have qualified professionals remaining outside the health system. Every recruitment decision must contribute to strengthening healthcare delivery and ensuring that citizens have access to quality services,” he emphasized.

Dr. Mwabu further implored Government to address other concerns raised during the 2024 and 2025 recruitment exercises, such as corruption allegations, procedural weaknesses and other irregularities, through appropriate review and investigation by the relevant authorities.

“Transparency and accountability are essential in building confidence in public sector recruitment. Quality healthcare begins with a health workforce recruitment system that is based on merit, fairness and accountability,” Dr. Mwabu emphasized.

“The 2026 health worker recruitment exercise is not merely about filling vacancies. It is about strengthening Zambia’s healthcare system and ensuring that qualified health professionals are recruited through a process that is fair, credible and transparent.”

LCC COMPLETES REHABILITATION OF 3 ABLUTION BLOCKS AT NEW SOWETO MARKET

By Money Daily Reporter



Lusaka City Council (LCC) says rehabilitation works on three ablution blocks at New Soweto Market have been completed at a cost of K592,557.

New Soweto Market is one of the largest trading hubs in Lusaka, with over 9,000 traders.

Council Public Relations Manager, Chola Mwamba, said the project was undertaken under the Local Authority’s capital projects funded through own source revenue.

“The rehabilitation of the ablution facilities was necessitated by the growing need to provide clean, safe, and conducive sanitation infrastructure for traders and members of the public who frequent the market,” she said.

Ms. Mwamba noted that the improvement of sanitation facilities is part of the Council’s broader strategy to enhance the trading environment, promote public health, and prevent diseases that thrive in conditions of poor sanitation.

“In addition to New Soweto Market, Kabwata Market has also benefited from the rehabilitation of its ablution blocks under the same programme,” Ms. Mwamba added.

She reaffirmed the Council’s dedication to upgrading sanitation infrastructure in all trading areas and markets across the city to ensure a clean, healthy, and dignified trading environment for all.



JDDZ DONATES 60 JERSEY CATTLE SEMEN STRAWS TO BOOST DAIRY GENETICS IN MONZE

By Cecilia Chiluba



Jersey Dairy Development Zambia (JDDZ) has donated 60 straws of Jersey cattle Semen to Monze District Fisheries and Livestock Office, as part of ongoing efforts to improve dairy genetics and increase productivity among smallholder dairy farmers.

The donated semen will be made available free of charge to dairy farmers interested in improving the genetic quality of their herds.

Farmers will also benefit from free artificial insemination (AI) services, which will be provided by a JDDZ-trained inseminator based in Monze.

The Jersey breed is renowned for producing milk with a significantly higher butterfat content than many other dairy breeds and compares favorably with the widely used Holstein-Friesian and Livestock through the Department of Livestock Development, Monze District, will oversee the implementation of the programme by providing technical supervision, coordinating service delivery, and maintaining an up-to-date database of all beneficiary farmers to facilitate monitoring and evaluation,” he added.

Mr. Munyama explained that the promotion of Jersey genetics is expected to enhance milk quality, improve household nutrition, increase farmer incomes, and strengthen the competitiveness of Zambia's dairy sector.

He stressed that to access the service, farmers will be required to purchase the necessary hormones; and provide transport for the inseminator, who serves as a locally based volunteer trained by JDDZ.

“The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock through the Department of Livestock Development, Monze District, will oversee the implementation of the programme by providing technical supervision, coordinating service delivery, and maintaining an up-to-date database of all beneficiary farmers to facilitate monitoring and evaluation,” he added.

Mr. Munyama added that the initiative is also aims to promote climate-resilient and sustainable dairy husbandry practices, increase milk production and quality, improve food and nutrition security, and sustainably enhance the livelihoods and incomes of smallholder dairy farming households.

“This partnership between the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and the Jersey Dairy Development Zambia represents an important step towards strengthening the dairy sub-sector through improved genetics, increased productivity, and inclusive support for smallholder farmers,” he added.

LUMEZI DISTRICT RECEIVES K1.7 MILLION FOR REVISED CASH FOR WORK PROGRAM

By Money Daily Reporter



Government has between Monday, 13th July to Wednesday, 15th July, 2026 followed by verification of beneficiaries' details over a 2-days period. Revised Cash for Work program implementation in Lumezi District, Eastern Province for July, 2026.

Lumezi Town Council Assistant Public Relations Officer, Irvin Muyumbwa, said of the total allocation, about K1.6 million will be used to pay wages of K600 each to 2,787 residents distributed across the eleven wards, who will undertake 10 days labour intensive public works in exchange for cash payments.

Mr. Muyumbwa explained that the pool recruitment of the Revised Cash for Work program will run

beneficiaries for the month of August is expected to be disbursed by government,” Mr. Muyumbwa added.

In the 2023/2024 farming season, the country experienced a severe drought which was declared a national disaster and emergency on 29th February, 2024 by President Hakainde Hichilema.

As a response, government introduced the Cash for Work program to support vulnerable households through temporary employment opportunities. The program has since been extended both by duration and coverage of all districts for 6 months.

“Actual works under the Revised Cash for Work will commence on Saturday, 18th July and end on Monday, 27th July, 2026, marking a 10-days work schedule after which, beneficiaries are expected to be paid on 30th July, 2026,” he said.

He added that the initiative is expected to improve community infrastructure, reduce poverty and hunger, thereby increasing individual self respect and dignity in society.

“Another allocation of the recruitment of



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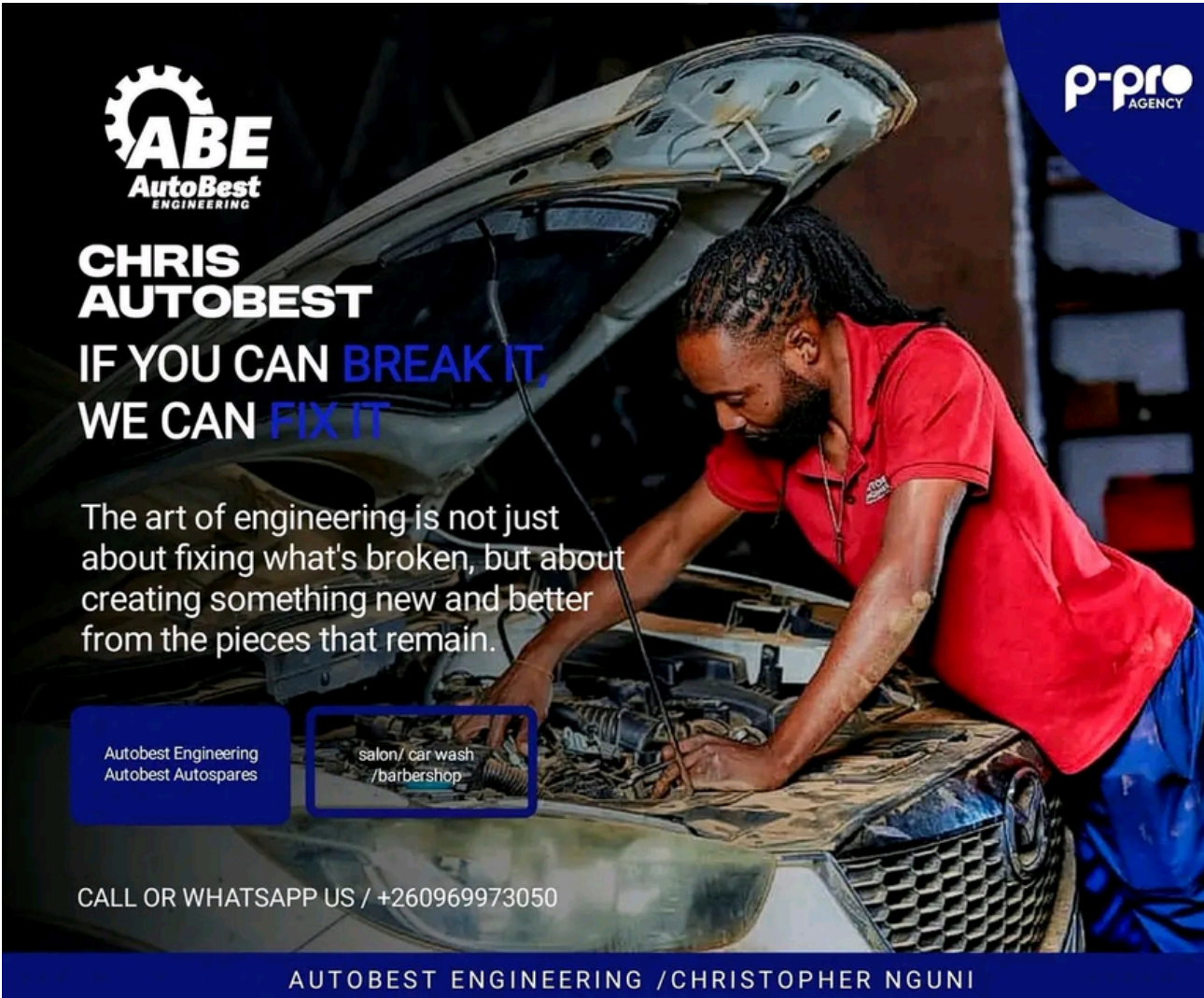
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DELAYED FRA PURCHASES COULD LEAVE FARMERS COUNTING THE COST

The Food Reserve Agency (FRA) has assured the nation that it is ready for the 2026 crop marketing season. Buying depots have been identified, digital payment systems are being introduced, and consultations on maize and paddy rice prices are nearing completion. On paper, the preparations appear encouraging.

Yet for thousands of farmers across Zambia, one question remains unanswered: when will the buying actually begin?

The FRA's explanation that maize moisture content remains above the acceptable 12.5 percent threshold is scientifically sound. Grain stored with excessive moisture risks spoilage, mould growth and aflatoxin contamination, posing serious health and food security risks. No responsible institution should compromise on grain quality.

However, while the technical justification is understandable, the economic consequences of prolonged delays cannot be ignored.

For many small-scale farmers, the harvest is not merely food in storage—it is their annual source of income. It is from maize sales that families pay school fees, settle outstanding debts, purchase farming inputs for the next season, meet household expenses and prepare for the coming months. Every additional week spent waiting for FRA depots to open creates financial pressure that many rural households can scarcely afford.

Timing in agriculture is everything. Farmers have already invested heavily in seed, fertilizer, labour and transport during the production season. They now expect to recover those investments through timely sales. When the market remains uncertain, cash flow dries up, leaving farmers unable to meet immediate obligations.

The uncertainty surrounding the purchase price compounds the challenge. FRA has indicated that consultations on maize and paddy rice prices are still underway. Consultation is important, particularly when balancing the interests of farmers, consumers and Government finances. But consultations also have deadlines. Farmers cannot plan effectively when they do not know what price their produce will fetch.

The absence of an announced floor price creates room for speculative buying by private traders.

This is perhaps the greatest risk facing farmers today.

Private buyers often move quickly into farming communities whenever FRA delays opening its depots. They understand that many farmers need immediate cash and are therefore willing to accept lower prices simply to meet pressing financial needs. In such situations, farmers become price takers rather than price negotiators.

By the time FRA eventually announces its buying price, a significant proportion of maize may already have been

sold below its true value.

Ironically, this undermines one of FRA's core objectives—to provide a guaranteed market and stabilize producer prices.

This year's harvest is expected to be among Zambia's strongest in recent years. Government itself has celebrated the bumper crop as

payments is a progressive reform that should improve efficiency, transparency and convenience. Faster electronic payments can significantly reduce delays that have frustrated farmers in previous years.

However, digital efficiency after purchase cannot compensate for delays before purchase.

more quickly while preserving grain quality. Community drying facilities, improved storage technologies and stronger extension services would complement FRA's efforts and shorten the waiting period.

Ultimately, Zambia's food security begins with the farmer. Every policy, every procurement exercise and every marketing decision should reinforce that principle.

Protecting grain quality is unquestionably important. But protecting farmers' livelihoods is equally important.

The challenge before FRA is therefore not choosing between quality and speed. It is finding a balance that safeguards both. Farmers have done their part by producing a bumper harvest. They now deserve timely market access, a fair price and prompt payment.

Only then will the success of this year's harvest be fully realised—not just in national statistics, but in the lives of the families who grew the nation's food.

Both elements must work together.

Similarly, the establishment of 1,749 buying depots demonstrates commendable logistical preparation. But depots only become meaningful when they are operational. Farmers are less concerned about the number of depots than about whether those depots are actually buying maize.

Looking ahead, Government and FRA may need to consider more proactive approaches.

Moisture monitoring should begin well before the harvesting season reaches its peak, allowing authorities to anticipate likely opening dates. Price consultations could also be concluded earlier so that once grain meets quality standards, purchasing can begin immediately without further administrative delays.

Greater investment in farmer education on post-harvest drying techniques could also help reduce moisture levels

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THINK BUSINESS

LIVESTOCK FUND GATHERS PACE

DON'T PANIC OVER EL NIÑO FORECAST, FARMERS TOLD

By The Namibian



The government and Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU) are working on a livestock price equalisation fund to address cattle marketing challenges in the northern communal areas (NCAs).

NNFU chief executive Kuniberth Shamathe told The Namibian last week that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform has asked the union to provide inputs on how the fund should be implemented.

Shamathe said the NNFU strongly supports the

establishment of the fund.

“As a farmers’ union, we are also supporting the general idea of establishing fodder production, green schemes and feedlots,” Shamathe said.

Approved by the Cabinet in 2024, the NCA Price Equalisation Fund is aimed at addressing low cattle marketing and financial disparities currently affecting farmers in the NCAs.

It also seeks to compensate livestock producers north of the veterinary cordon fence for the disparities they face

compared to their counterparts south of the fence.

The main rationale for creating the fund is that the animal disease status north of the veterinary cordon fence is not the fault of livestock producers in that part of the country, yet they bear the brunt of its negative impact.

The agriculture ministry this year issued a statement saying the formal marketing of cattle in the NCAs currently stands at 15% of the cattle population, which is very low.

By Chronicle

Zimbabwe will continue to rely on seasonal forecasts from the Meteorological Services Department (MSD) before making final projections of the forthcoming 2026/27 summer cropping season, a senior Government official said.

Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development Permanent Secretary Professor Obert Jiri, in an interview, said the seasonal forecasts should be viewed as early warning systems rather than predictions of disaster.

Professor Jiri urged farmers not to panic over the projected El Niño during the

2026/27 summer cropping season, as the phenomenon does not always mean disaster.

To lessen the negative impact of the projected El Niño phenomenon, farmers were encouraged to prepare early.

Professor Jiri said although international climate models indicated a high probability of El Niño conditions developing, the most important message from current climate models was that the coming agricultural season had a greater likelihood of being drier than the previous one.

“There is a high probability of

an El Niño, which some are calling a Super El Niño. As the Government, we are already taking note of these developments and planning for such an outcome, while awaiting confirmation from our Meteorological Services Department after the Southern African regional climate forecasting processes,” he said.

“When we plan, we plan for the worst-case scenario, but people should not panic. El Niño and La Niña are natural climate patterns that come and go, and their impacts are not always the same in every country or district.”



EXCHANGE RATES

Last updated: 13-07-2026

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
ZMW / USD	18.0115	18.0615
ZMW / GBP	24.0814	24.1537
ZMW / EUR	20.5386	20.5992
ZMW / ZAR	1.0979	1.1011

Download historical rates



Source: Bank of Zambia (BOZ)



BANDA, KUNDANANJI LEAD COPPER QUEENS' WAFCON CHARGE

By Lucky Chama

Captain Barbra Banda and star striker Rachael Kundananji will spearhead Zambia's quest for a maiden Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title after being named in the Copper Queens' final 26-member squad for the continental showpiece.

Assistant coach Charles Haalubono unveiled the squad at Football House on behalf of head coach Nora Häuptle, who is expected to join the team in Algeria for the final phase of preparations.

The Copper Queens leave

for Algeria on Tuesday for a week-long training camp, where they will face the Algerian national team in two international friendly matches on July 19 and July 21 before travelling to Morocco for the tournament.

Haalubono said the pre-tournament camp would provide the team with an ideal opportunity to fine-tune preparations ahead of the continental competition.

He added that foreign-based players whose leagues are still in progress

will travel directly to Algeria to join the rest of the squad. The attacking department is headlined by reigning African Women's Footballer of the Year Barbra Banda of Orlando Pride and Bay FC forward Rachael Kundananji, who are expected to play key roles alongside Prisca Chilufya, Kabange Mupopo and Ochumba Lubanji.

In midfield, the experienced Grace Chanda returns alongside Hellen Chanda, Ireen Lungu and Susan Banda, while the defensive unit features Margaret

Belemu, Martha Tembo, Saliya Mwanza and Siomala Mapepa.

Hazel Nali, Catherine Musonda and Chishala Mfunte will compete for the goalkeeping position.

Haalubono urged Zambians to rally behind the team as they pursue their first-ever WAFCON crown.

He also praised Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) for its continued sponsorship and support of the Copper Queens. Zambia has been drawn in

a challenging Group C alongside defending champions Nigeria, Egypt and regional rivals Malawi.

The Copper Queens will begin their campaign against Egypt on July 28 before facing Nigeria on August 1. They will conclude the group stage against Malawi on August 5.

The top four teams at the tournament will secure qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil.

YAMAL AIMS TO STEAL MBAPPE'S WORLD CUP THUNDER IN SEMIFINAL SHOWDOWN



By AFP - Lamine Yamal is hoping to emulate Kylian Mbappe by winning the World Cup as a teenager, but first his Spain side will have to get the better of France and their superstar captain in Tuesday's semi-final.

birthday was the day before the final. Spain beat England, and Yamal was named young player of the tournament.

This time his 19th birthday comes on the eve of the semi-final in Arlington.

When Mbappe scored in France's win over Croatia in the deciding match of the 2018 tournament, he was just 19 years and 207 days old. He therefore became only the second teenager to score in a World Cup final after a 17-year-old Pele in 1958.

Such a young player with his best years to come. But he is clearly eager to leave a firm mark on this World Cup. Perhaps too eager, having at one point been a doubt for the tournament after missing the end of the season with Barcelona due to a hamstring injury.

Mbappe's love affair with the World Cup began then, while this is Yamal's first experience of the competition.

"I was afraid it might be serious and, above all, that even if it wasn't serious, I could suffer a setback and end up missing the World Cup," Yamal admitted in late May.

He has already had his big breakthrough in a major tournament, however — Yamal's stunning goal in the Euro 2024 semi-final against Mbappe's France helped Spain to a 2-1 victory.

Anxiety?

After coming off the bench in Spain's opening 0-0 draw with Cape Verde, Yamal started against Saudi Arabia and scored before being replaced at half-time in a 4-0 victory.

That came four days before he turned 17. His

‘FINAL BEFORE FINAL’: FRANCE FACE SPAIN IN WORLD CUP BLOCKBUSTER

By AFP

Spain will attempt to neutralise one of the most potent attacking arsenals in World Cup history on Tuesday when they take on France in a heavyweight semi-final showdown.

The reigning European champions and Didier Deschamps' French team face off at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas in what is seen by many as a 'final before the final' featuring the two best sides left in the tournament.

In the blue corner are France, who have progressed serenely to the last four on the back of a multi-pronged strike-force spearheaded by captain Kylian Mbappe — he has scored eight goals in six games. Mbappe's supporting cast

includes Bayern Munich star Michael Olise, Ballon D'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and Paris Saint-Germain duo Bradley Barcola and Desire Doue.

In the red corner, Spain, who have calmly worked their way into the semi-finals with their brand of possession-based, relentless football that has become their trademark under Luis de la Fuente.

While individual brilliance has lit up France's campaign, Spain have relied on collective menace — a well-oiled machine founded on the silky passing of midfielders such as Rodri, Pedri and Fabian Ruiz, providing ammunition for teenage winger Lamine Yamal.

It all adds up to a classic clash of styles that will see



Spain attempt to sever the supply lines to Mbappe and company by controlling possession, while simultaneously seeking to put pressure on a France defence that has yet to be seriously tested.

While that may be easier said than done, Spain will take encouragement from their recent record against France.

La Roja defeated France 5-4 in a high-scoring UEFA Nations League thriller last year, and also scored a 2-1 semi-final win

en route to victory at the European Championship in 2024.

Nothing to fear

Yamal, who will go into Tuesday's blockbuster just a day after turning 19, says Spain have nothing to fear.

"Obviously we are two great teams, among the best in the world. We'll see what happens, but we have no fear," Yamal said after Spain's 2-1 quarter-final defeat of Belgium in Los Angeles on Friday.



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