

SECOND REPUBLIC MILESTONES



The Herald Online

Second Republic's delivery rate outstanding

Zvamaida Murwira
Senior Reporter

THE Second Republic embarked 2 003 projects last year, with 1 245 completed while 758 were at different stages of implementation, as Government presses ahead with implementing people-centric, life-changing and high impact programmes and projects across all sectors of the economy.

As the development projects are implemented, focus has been on using home-grown solutions, internally generated funds and the exploitation of the country's natural resources.

To this end, 2 003 projects were implemented last year, with 1 245 completed while 758 were ongoing.

In a Compendium of projects

undertaken last year that was compiled by the Office of the President and Cabinet through Special Advisor to the President Responsible for Monitoring Implementation of Government Programmes, Dr Joram Gumbo, President Mnangagwa said pursuant to its transformative agenda, the Second Republic defied all odds and continued to strategically employ home-grown solutions, encompassing exploitation of its natural resource endowments and optimisation of its human capital. "This is premised on the Whole of Economy approach and the all-inclusive philosophy of the Second Republic encapsulated in the mantra, 'Nyika Inovakwa Nevene Vayo/ Ilizwe lakhiwa ngabanikazi balo' with the aim of, leaving no one and no place behind," he said.

"In spite of the adversities spanning geo-political factors, climate-induced calamities and the heinous illegal sanctions bent on crippling the country's economic development, the Second Republic has successfully implemented people-centric, life changing and high impact programmes and projects across all sectors of the economy."

President Mnangagwa said it was critical to highlight the projects being implemented by the Government.

"Successes recorded are publicised regularly in order to inform the nation on the status of programmes and projects implementation country-wide. This Compendium covers programmes and projects which were implemented by the Second Republic during the year 2023, highlight-

ing remarkable achievements in the country's development trajectory for the accelerated attainment of Vision 2030," he said.

"Guided by the national development philosophy of collective duty and obligation to diligently work and develop the country, all citizens are urged to remain focused for the accelerated attainment of the national vision of becoming an Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030."

In his preface to the Compendium, Dr Gumbo noted that the Government under the leadership of President Mnangagwa, continued to register landmark achievements towards the betterment of Zimbabweans.

"Tangible programmes and projects were delivered across all sectors

of the economy with agriculture, mining, social services and transport leading the transformative agenda. The programmes and projects contributed to a stable and sustained economic growth path, recording a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 4.5 percent in 2023. The socio-economic growth is also evidenced by an increase in local natural resource exploitation, up-scaling of skills, increased employment creation and modernisation of infrastructure and improved livelihoods among other successes recorded.

"This 2023 Compendium is the fourth edition after the 2018-2020, 2021 and 2018-2022 editions. A total of 2003 projects were implemented during the year 2023.

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Supplement compiled for the Office of the Special Advisor to the President on Monitoring Implementation of Government Programmes and Projects

ED transforms education

Nqobile Tshili

OVER 500 new schools and an additional 1 000 classroom blocks have been constructed across the country in the last five years as the Second Republic led by President Mnangagwa accelerates the transformation of the education sector to derive higher development impact for future generations.

Through close collaboration with the private sector and development partners, Zimbabwe, during the period under review, has witnessed the construction of about 1 509 science laboratories while over 600 boreholes have been drilled to improve water and sanitation in schools.

The massive construction projects in schools have been driven mainly by devolution funding, and partnerships with development agencies and religious organisations, creating more job opportunities in the process.

The milestone developments in the education sector are contained in Zimbabwe's 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the country presented before the United Nations.

As a United Nations signatory, Zimbabwe has committed to the implementation of SDGs, which among other things demand equitable access to education, and that member countries implement development projects that leave no one and no place behind.

Through leveraging partnerships and using local resources Zimbabwe has aimed at providing inclusive quality education in line with global standards.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister, Torerayi Moyo, recently said the Government had achieved commendable strides and continues to improve education infrastructure and teaching methods.

"We have done very well in terms of providing quality education in schools. We are walking the talk in terms of providing quality education."

"We are constructing new schools and I am confident we have constructed more than 500 schools in the past five years," said Minister Moyo.

"This year alone, we have commissioned more than 100 new schools. We have partners who have supported us in the construction of new schools and even the schools that have been constructed by private players have been initiated by the Government."

Minister Moyo said the Second Republic has created a favourable environment for learners and teachers by reducing the distance travelled to and from schools.

"We are improving the pedagogy

delivers over 500 new schools

1 000 classroom blocks



The massive construction projects in schools have been driven mainly by devolution funding, and partnerships with development agencies and religious organisations, creating more job opportunities in the process

ical methodologies and conducting in-service training to our teachers so that we produce 21st-century learners with digital technology skills," he said.

"We are focusing on artificial intelligence, robotics, and coding and we want to thank the President for being a listening leader who has supported educational programmes through funding including the Presidential Computers Programme."

Russian partnership boosts teachers

Minister Moyo announced that to help teachers adopt 21st-century teaching skills, the Government has collaborated with Russia. Through this partnership, teachers participate in month-long online courses led by Russian professors.

Minister Moyo stated that 25 teachers are recruited each month to participate in intensive online training focused on integrating machine learning into the education sector. This initiative aims to enhance the country's global competitiveness in delivering high-quality education.

"We have the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), which has constructed 17 schools and the President commissioned these earlier this year. OFID has also committed to the construction of 50 new schools next year," he said.

Minister Moyo said development

partners including Unicef continue to pour funds into the education sector, which has seen existing schools being renovated.

"Unicef provides a school improvement grant of between US\$3 000 and US\$5 000, which schools are using for the renovations of classrooms. It also has a water and sanitation programme where it is drilling boreholes in school," he said.

"This year 150 solarised boreholes were drilled in Manicaland and Matabeleland South and next year 100 solarised boreholes will be drilled in schools in Masvingo and Midlands. Also, in schools where the solar system is installed, Unicef donates computers to each school."

"It is also supporting the emergency school feeding programme. I know that it is funding the feeding programme in 90 schools in Binga Matabeleland North," said Minister Moyo.

He said it was pleasing that some organisations doing philanthropic works have constructed new classroom blocks and science laboratories across the country.

In Bulawayo, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, as part of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), has constructed several classroom blocks and science laboratories to the tune of US\$1,6 million to enhance quality education.

Minister Moyo said individual

citizens have equally invested in the construction of new schools. He said to ensure the country delivers quality education that leaves no place and no one behind, the ministry was developing an 'Inclusive Education Policy' with its draft paper expected to be presented before Cabinet soon.

While Cabinet is working on the Inclusive Education Policy, the Ministry is already rolling out programmes that leave no child behind, he added.

"We have adopted an inclusive approach, which incorporates even children with disabilities so that they are not left behind in accessing quality education."

"We are procuring devices so that those with hearing impairments or visual impairments are also assisted. The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (Zimsec) is already conducting special needs examinations where it provides aids to enable those with special needs to write public examinations," said Minister Moyo.

"So, as a regulator, we are there to monitor the implementation of these projects so that a good learning environment is obtained in schools."

He said the ministry is also aware of illegal schools, especially situated in high-density suburbs where pupils are being taught in squalid conditions not suitable for the deliv-

ery of education.

Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare SDGs and Agenda 2063 Deputy Director, Ms Sylocious Chaturika, said between 2022 and 2023, the Government constructed at least 200 schools.

"Funding models for the construction of schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education include the Government funding national budget through the fiscus and devolution funds."

"There is also funding from development loans from multilateral institutions, community contributions, private players and partner funding," said Ms Chaturika.

A local investor and Active Group of Schools chairman, Mr Victor Moyo, said in the past three years they have constructed three schools within Bulawayo while a fourth one is under construction.

"We are simply trying to complement the Government's efforts to bring education to the people. My departure point when we started these projects was about bringing quality education in high-density suburbs but we find ourselves moving back to eastern suburbs to construct schools with the availability of land being the push factor," said Mr Moyo.

He said unlocking funding for the construction of schools remains a major challenge for those who are investing in the education sector.

Preamble by Dr Gumbo on Government programmes, projects

I will preface my address by making reference to the words of the late great statesman, Kwame Nkrumah, who observed, that 'Action without thought is empty. Thought without action is blind.' Doubtless, Nkrumah's words, timeless in their truth, remind us of the importance of deliberate, purposeful action, even in the most challenging circumstances.

It is in this light that I must, from the onset, express my profound delight at this opportunity to once again, tour Binga District. The import of my visit, is to appreciate the progress in the delivery of programmes and projects which are being implemented under the aegis of the Binga Development Initiatives. These initiatives, as you may be aware, were enunciated by His Excellency, the President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa during his visit to Siabuwa in March 2021 the intention of laying the cornerstone that will stimulate the broader socio-economic development of the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you may be aware, the Constitution of Zimbabwe, in Chapter 14, established devolution as the development trajectory. This cardinal provision was augmented by the Devolution and Decentralisation policy which lay the foundation for shared, inclusive and participatory development of Zimbabwe. Needless to state, it is because of this, that His Excellency, The President, Dr E.D. Mnangagwa was philosophical in boldly proclaiming and reaffirming the commitment of 'leaving no one and no place behind.' Today, Binga stands as testament to this commitment.

Over the past three years, we witnessed the purposeful implementation of various projects. These include projects that I toured in June 2024 such as:

1. The establishment of the Saba Small Holder Irrigation Scheme which contributes to food and income security for beneficiaries.

This week, I managed to tour 10 high impact projects which spanned various sectors such as energy, health, social services and infrastructure development. In the energy sector projects, Government must be commented for its enduring efforts to ensure improved welfare of Chiefs including the electrification of their homesteads, as well as schools and health facilities. However, and concerning, I was made aware that while 13 of the 17 Chief's homesteads had transformers, only 4 of these were connected to the homesteads. Further to that, during my tour of the Siabuzuba Clinic, I was alerted that the lithium batteries were nonfunctional and require urgent replacement. Other issues of concern raised included the inadequate number of schools, particularly, primary schools were pupils have to walk long distances to access these facilities. I cannot overemphasise that addressing these pressing challenges remains

Government's priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I toured the Binga Disaster Recovery Houses. Evidently, through this project, Government reiterated its commitment to providing shelter for flood victims in Binga District. Equally praiseworthy is the ongoing construction of ablution facilities, which will greatly enhance water and sanitation standards in the area, ensuring healthier and safer living conditions. However, it is with some concern that I note the delayed occupancy of the houses, with signs of wear and tear already beginning to emerge. Therefore, it is imperative that the homes are occupied by their intended beneficiaries, preventing further dilapidation and ensuring that these resources fulfil their intended purpose.

Moreover, it is critical to acknowledge the tremendous impact of the fishing rigs project, which have been transformative for the youth and women of Binga. Undoubtedly, not only has this project created economic opportunities and fostered financial inclusion, but has also extended to empowering these groups to actively participate in shaping their futures. After all, it is common cause, as espoused in the National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) read together with the National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2, that the overarching aim of Government is to eradicate poverty, empower women and youths through sustainable livelihood initiatives. However, it must be noted that the high licensing fees present a weighty obstacle, limiting the full potential of this project.

While we celebrate the progress recorded so far, it is important to address the issue of funding that has significantly hindered the completion of several key projects in the district. Of particular concern are the District Registry Office, Binga Border Post, Binga-Siakobvu road, Manjolo and Lusulu boarding initiative and the construction of Binga Polytechnic College among others, all of which have stalled primarily due to limited financial resources. These projects are critical to the socio-economic development of Binga and should not be left incomplete.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Going forward, we must reignite the momentum with which we began in the implementation of these initiatives. But as we do so, we ought to remember and be emboldened by the knowledge that the people remain the subject and object of the existence of Government. That is why His Excellency, The President, Dr E.D. Mnangagwa, in his address at the first Cabinet Meeting of 2024, rightly observed that,

'Citizens are the primary beneficiaries of our efforts and open line of communication with them should be maintained, including through active Thematic Working Group discussions. Their input, support and expertise are invaluable in driving sustainable develop-



General Beltings Holdings Limited group managing director Mr Joseph Gunda explains production processes to Special Advisor to the President on Monitoring Implementation of Government Programmes and Projects Joram Gumbo during a familiarisation tour



ment and ensuring the success of our initiatives.'

Needless to state, the profundity of this reminder compels us to center our efforts on the people, drawing upon their collective wisdom and expertise to drive meaningful and sustainable development, not only for Binga, but for Zimbabwe. Additionally, to complement Government efforts, it is essential that communities take an active role as agents and champions of community-led monitoring. The people must be empowered to take ownership of the projects in their localities by tracking their progress and ensuring accountability at every stage.

This process, not only strengthens transparency but also ensures that the projects are aligned with local needs and are implemented in a manner that serves the people's

best interests. Furthermore, it is essential to recognise that the success of these initiatives hinges on the seamless collaboration between Government agencies, local authorities, and the communities themselves. These stakeholders must work in unison to ensure that policies are translated into actionable steps capable of responding the specific needs of the people.

As I conclude, it is imperative that our conversations evolve from focusing solely on challenges to being driven by solutions and results. While it is easy to get caught up in the obstacles we face, true progress lies in our ability to devise and implement actionable solutions that directly address these issues. We are therefore enjoined to adopt a mindset that sees opportunities within challenges and harnesses our collective strengths to overcome them.

This approach will not only move us forward but also ensure that our efforts are purposeful, impactful, and aligned with the collective aspirations of our communities. I need not reiterate the assurances that my office, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders will continue to monitor projects and track performance to ensure project success and an accelerated pace of implementation, towards the attainment of Vision 2030.

May I, at this juncture, take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to the traditional leadership and all stakeholders represented here for the hospitality that we enjoyed in Binga. Your generosity and commitment have greatly contributed to the success of our visit and the advancement of our shared goals.

I Thank You!

Nqobile Tshili

THE Lake Gwayi-Tshangani project in Matabeleland North province has received new impetus with the commencement of construction of huge water booster pump stations that will convey water from the dam site to Bulawayo.

Financed through local resources, the giant project is part of a multi-pronged approach by the Second Republic led by President Mnangagwa to provide a permanent solution to Bulawayo's water crisis.

While works on the Lake Gwayi-Tshangani wall have been suspended due to funding challenges, China International Water and Electric Corporation (CIWE), which won tender to construct two booster stations has made significant progress in establishing booster pump stations.

A total of six booster stations will be constructed along the 245km pipeline to Bulawayo and yesterday a Chronicle news yesterday observed teams busy at work in different segments of the project on the border area between Lupane and Tsholotsho Districts. Government has roped in 11 companies to execute the pipeline project.

Locals and Chinese nationals were busy doing multi tasks in the construction of the booster pump station supervised by the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (Zinwa) on behalf of the Government.

Zinwa resident engineer for the Gwayi-Tshangani-Bulawayo pipeline, Engineer Elliot Makombe, said the construction of the booster pump station was part of the multi-pronged approach to complete the project that will bring water to Bulawayo.

"We are constructing two of the five booster pump stations. Where we are right now we are in booster pump station number three.

"These booster pump stations will help us to convey water from Gwayi-Tshangani Dam all the way to Bulawayo," he said.

"This tank where we are carries about 6,6 megalitres and it's duplicated all the way from the dam to Bulawayo."

Eng Makombe said he was supervising the construction of five booster stations with two more falling under the construction of the dam site.

He explained how water will be pumped from the dam site to Bulawayo.

"Between pump station number two in Mabale to this tank, there is going to be a big tank where pump station number two pumps in water and it gravitates to this booster pump station.

"This booster pump station pumps to the next station, which is pump station number four to five and sixth one, which is around Nyamandlovu," said Eng Makombe.

"From the Nyamandlovu water will be pumped into the treatment plant in Cowdray Park and then to Magwegwe Reservoir and some will be pumped to Criterion Reservoir."

He said 220 megalitres will be pumped into Bulawayo on a daily basis, which will address the city's water crisis as the city requires about 160 megalitres per day.

Eng Makombe said at each of the pump stations, 200 hectares of irrigation schemes will be established turn-

Construction of water boosters for Lake Gwayi-Shangani begins



ing the region into a green belt while communities along the pipeline will also benefit from the water resource.

"So, at each and every pump station there is a provision for that 200ha irrigation scheme and along the way there is going to be some provision of clear water supply, especially around Mabale, Hwange National Park and Dete. We are going to put a borehole there," he said.

"From there up to Bulawayo we are going to give schools, clinics water to use."

Eng Makombe said the booster pump stations will be constructed at a cost of US\$167 million, adding that the financing model of the contract demands that contractors who win the tenders finance the 30 percent of the project.

He said this has enabled the commencement of the construction of the booster pump stations.

"People may ask why we are constructing before the completion of the dam? We are riding on the terms for this project. There was a 30 percent pre-financing clause, so the contractor you are seeing here is using own money," said Eng Makombe.

"The contractor is using 30 percent of US\$167 million to construct pump station number two and number three."

Eng Makombe said the contractor is sometimes working overnight shifts to ensure the project sustains structural integrity.

"As you know we are in the Kalahari sand area and the foundation for this pump station was very tricky, the sands are very sensitive to loading. So, we had to excavate to stabilise the soil and we had to put the geomebrane to make sure water does not leak," he said.

"On top of the geomebrane we

had to put concrete binding and that is where we started this foundation including concrete for this 6,5 megalitres tank. We have concreted the bottom and we are now concreting the walls."

Eng Makombe said the pump station will only be tested for its functionality when the dam is completed and water is pumped into it.

"This pump station when completed needs to be cured and this tank needs a lot of water and it has to wait for the completion of the dam construction.

"It's a big station. We can't use boreholes and we can't use tanks. So, the functionality of the pump station depends on the completion of the dam," said Eng Makombe.

He said the project has also benefited locals who have been employed in the various stages of the construction process.

Govt reignites momentum for projects implementation

Wallace Ruzvidzo
Herald Reporter

THE Government is reigniting the momentum with which it is implementing its programmes and projects across the country to accelerate attainment of an upper-middle income society by 2030, Special Advisor to the President on monitoring implementation of Government programmes and projects, Dr Joram Gumbo, has said.

In his remarks in Binga recently where he was appreciating the progress made in the delivery of projects under the aegis of the Binga Development Initiative, Dr Gumbo said the aspirations of people ought to be met.

"Going forward, we must reignite the momentum with which we began in the implementation of these initiatives," he said. In his address at the first Cabinet meeting this year, President Mnangagwa said the people were the primary beneficiaries of "our efforts and open lines of communication with them should be maintained, including through active thematic working group discussions".

Added Dr Gumbo: "Needless to state, the profundity of this reminder compels us to centre our efforts on the people, drawing upon their collective wisdom and expertise to drive meaningful and sustainable development, not only for Binga, but for Zimbabwe.

"Additionally, to complement Government efforts, it is essential that communities take an active role as agents and champions of community-led monitoring."

Dr Gumbo said the people would be empowered to take ownership of projects in their localities so they could track progress and ensure accountability at every stage.

Such a process not only strengthened transparency, but also ensured the projects were aligned with local needs and were implemented in a manner that served the people's best interests.

It was essential to recognise that the success of such initiatives hinged on the seamless collaboration between Government agencies, local authorities and the communities.

"These stakeholders must work in unison to ensure that policies are translated into actionable steps capable of responding to the specific needs of the people," he said.

Government, said Dr Gumbo, was committed to providing shelter for flood victims in Binga District.

Presently, ablution facilities are under construction, a development expected to enhance water and sanitation standards in the area, ensuring healthier and safer living conditions. However, he was concerned about the delayed occupancy of the houses constructed for flood victims, with signs of wear and tear.

"Therefore, it is imperative that the homes are occupied by their intended beneficiaries, preventing further dilapidation and ensuring that these resources fulfil their intended purpose."

Vision 2030: Zimbabwe's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals

Nqobile Tshili

ZIMBABWE has made significant strides towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the Government aligning global development agenda targets with its national vision of transforming the country into an upper-middle-income economy by 2030.

SDGs are global developmental goals and United Nations member States have committed to their implementation from 2015 to 2030.

In his foreword to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented before the United Nations, President Mnangagwa reaffirmed the Second Republic's commitment to achieving SDGs while also aligning them with Agenda 2063, the African Union's long-term development framework.

The VNR tracks the progress that Zimbabwe has made in the implementation of SDGs.

"The main objective of this VNR is to share experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons learned with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The review also served to provide evidence and data-driven decision-making on the implementation of SDGs," said President Mnangagwa.

He highlighted that the synchronisation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 ensures cohesive implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting by his Government.

"The VNR celebrates notable achievements in food and nutrition security, agricultural transformation, healthcare, education and training, gender equality, disability and youth inclusion, renewable energy adoption, and economic growth. These milestones exemplify Zimbabwe's dedication to equitable development and resilience-building amid global challenges," said President Mnangagwa.

Despite the country's relative success across sectors, climate-induced shocks, pandemics, global conflicts, and restrictions in the global financial architecture have negatively impacted SDG implementation, the President noted.

Nevertheless, he expressed gratitude to stakeholders who have supported Zimbabwe in addressing these challenges.

"Going forward, my Government will continue to take stock of progress made in implementing the SDGs as we strive for a better Zimbabwe for all, leaving no one and no place behind," said President Mnangagwa.

Looking ahead, the President assured the nation that his Government would continue to track pro-



Maternal mortality rates also improved, dropping from 614 per 100 000 in 2014 to 363 per 100 000

gress toward achieving the SDGs, with a focus on creating a better Zimbabwe for all and ensuring that no one and no place is left behind.

While Zimbabwe has embraced all 17 SDGs, the Government is prioritising the implementation of 11 goals, which encompass the broader scope of all targets.

The country has set itself a target of achieving Goal 2: Zero hunger, Goal 3: Good health and well-being, Goal 4: Accessible, quality, and inclusive education, Goal 5: Gender equality, Goal 6: Water and Sanitation.

Other goals that the country is aiming to achieve are Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy, Goal 8: Economic growth and decent jobs, Goal 9: Industrialisation, Innovation, and Infrastructure, Goal 13: Climate Action, Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Institutions, Goal 17: Partnerships.

The VNR executive summary acknowledged the importance of stakeholder involvement in the successful implementation of SDGs.

"The VNR celebrates notable achievements in food and nutrition security, agricultural transformation, healthcare, education and training, gender equality, disability, and youth inclusion, renewable energy adoption, and economic growth.

These milestones underscore Zimbabwe's commitment to equitable development and resilience-building amidst global challenges," the document noted.

"Efforts to bolster inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, coupled with investments in road construction, technology access, and industrial activities, reflect Zimbabwe's dedication to propelling inclusive economic growth."

Addressing inequalities

The review also praised the country's progress in addressing inequalities through community-driven development and transport infrastructure projects, highlighting its commitment to reducing disparities and empowering marginalised groups.

In the face of environmental concerns and climate change, Zimbabwe has demonstrated resilience by prioritising biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

One of the key achievements noted was in social protection, where 66 percent of vulnerable citizens received Government support in 2023, a two percent increase from the previous year. Maternal mortality rates also improved, dropping from 614 per 100 000 in 2014 to 363 per 100 000.

On education, the Heritage-Based curriculum continued to ensure holistic development, with a 90,98 percent completion rate at the primary school level and 65,95 percent at the lower secondary school level.

In terms of gender equality, women's participation in leadership and decision-making stood at 31 percent in

the National Assembly, 32,5 percent in senior public sector management, 38,8 percent in the Senate, and 42 percent in local government.

Access to electricity also showed improvement, with 62 percent of the population now connected to power. Additionally, 140 Independent Power Producer (IPP) projects were licensed to feed renewable energy into the national grid, underscoring the country's shift towards sustainable energy solutions.

Commitment to SDGs

The 2024 VNR concluded by reaffirming Zimbabwe's commitment to achieving SDGs through inclusivity, collaboration, and innovative approaches.

"By leveraging partnerships and embracing innovative solutions, Zimbabwe aims to build a resilient, equitable, and prosperous future for all its citizens, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of SDGs," the report read.

The document concluded that Zimbabwe's 2024 VNR exemplifies an unwavering commitment to sustainable development, rooted in inclusivity, collaboration, and proactive measures to address emerging challenges.

"By leveraging partnerships and embracing innovative solutions, Zimbabwe aims to build a resilient, equitable, and prosperous future for all its citizens, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of SDGs."

Second Republic's delivery rate outstanding

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"Programmes and projects implemented across the country varied from national, provincial to community-based initiatives."

In his preamble, Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr Martin Rushwaya, said judicious implementation of the e-enabled Whole of Government Performance Management System (WoGPMS) and the Executive Electronic Dashboard (EED), improved project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

"The e-enabled system also enhanced the provision of real-time information for evidence-based decision making and adoption of appropriate interventions. To expedite the implementation of high impact people-centric projects, the Rapid Results 100-Day Cycle Approach was used and remains an effective project implementation strategy," said Dr Rushwaya.

"The Tripartite, comprising the Office of the President and Cabinet, the Public Service Commission, and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion ensures that regular monitoring and provision of human and financial resources are catered for, albeit challenges. Achievements registered by the Second Republic in the year 2023 were made possible through a disciplined, committed, loyal and astute Government workforce and state actors."

It was noted in the compendium that projects implemented in 2023 addressed the core needs of the people ranging from provision of basic infrastructure to empowerment programmes and projects.

"The majority of the programmes and projects utilised locally available resources and expertise including labour, generating employment to thousands of people. Going forward increased resource mobilisation, strengthening monitoring and evaluation and retention of critical skills remain central to the delivery of key programmes and projects," reads the compendium.

According to an overview of the compendium, the 2 003 projects implemented were in the area of infrastructure and utilities, economic growth and stability, food and nutrition security environmental protection, climate resilience and natural resources management health and well-being social protection, devolution and decentralisation among others.



Lower Ncema. (Inset: Upper Ncema)

Insiza's Glassblock Dam to expedite rural construction

Sukulwenkosi Dube-Matutu

THE construction of Glassblock Bopoma Dam in Insiza District, Matabeleland South, will be fast-tracked by the Government as it is set to alleviate water challenges in Bulawayo and usher rural industrialisation through irrigation projects.

The dam has a projected holding capacity of 130 million cubic metres.

It is being constructed through a public private partnership (PPP).

Glassblock Bopoma Dam is strategically located at the intersection of Gwanda, Umzingwane and Filabusi districts and is expected to boost bulk water supplies for local communities.

The target is to complete the dam construction in two years and it is estimated to cost US\$100 million.

Plans to construct the dam were mooted in 1988 but implementation of the project was stalled due to funding and other logistical challenges.

Government is now pushing the implementation of the project, which will partly address Bulawayo's water shortage problems.

A 32km pipeline will link the

dam to the Ncema Dam pump station so that Bulawayo can access water from the dam.

Construction giant, JRG Construction led by prominent businessman, Mr James Ross (JR) Goddard, has been awarded the tender to construct the dam. Already, preparatory land clearance has been completed and the site is being equipped with the necessary machinery.

Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Vangelis Haritatos, recently conducted a tour of the project and assured communities that the project will be implemented to benefit local communities.

A green belt will be established along the 32km pipeline to support rural development and unlock more business opportunities.

"A project of this size is something that we will definitely promote and support as Government. This project will benefit locals who will be guaranteed water for irrigation and other uses. The dam will also address water shortage problems for Bulawayo," said Deputy Minister Haritatos.

He has directed the Department of Irrigation to look at what could be developed around the dam so that locals could directly benefit from the dam.

"The priority is to get water to Bulawayo but also equally important is the rural industrial development that comes with irrigation development. From here we will do our level best to push this project," he said.

The dam project is in line with the vision and expectations of the Second Republic.

Deputy Minister Haritatos said private players must come on board and support the initiative to mobilise resources to fund development projects, saying Government cannot do everything alone.

He commended JRG Construction, which has engaged finance institutions and other players to support the dam project.

Minister of State for Matabeleland South Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Dr Evelyn Ndlovu, said the dam will go a long way in bringing the much-needed development to the province, including boosting food security.

"This is the kind of development that we have always called for in our province where we develop one of our major sectors, which is agriculture. This dam will help to turn this area into a green belt," she said.

"It will address the issue of food security and water supply for both animals and people. It will birth a number of economic driven projects such as livestock production, crop production and fishery among others. It will also help to harness water that we have been losing to Limpopo River."

Dr Ndlovu said several meetings have been organised between herself, her counterpart Judith Ncube from Bulawayo Metropolitan Province and Bulawayo City Council, so that they understand the value of the proposed dam.

"They have shown full support for this project and we have also held a meeting with Minister Anxious Masuka to drum support for this project," said Dr Ndlovu.

On his part, Mr Goddard said they have set up a station to conduct preliminary works.

He clarified that the project will not replace Lake Gwayi-Shangani

project but will serve as a short term solution.

Mr Goddard said once the Lake Gwayi-Shangani project is completed, Bulawayo will get its water from the lake which means all the water from the dam will be for local communities.

Preliminary surveys have shown that the dam's construction will not displace any homesteads and could create over 200 jobs for locals.

"We have established a construction site for the first stage of construction, which will be excavation, grouting and preliminary works.

"We have cleared the plan area of the left and right earth embankments," said Mr Goddard.

The construction site has accommodation for staff, a workshop and site laboratory among other facilities.

"We are ready to commence work. Once we get the go ahead, then it's all systems go," said Mr Goddard.

While the dam has been set to be completed within two and a half years, the contractor will strive to complete the project in less than two years.

Transport infrastructure rehab boosts regional trade

Freeman Razemba
Senior Reporter

THE massive investment in transport infrastructure by the Second Republic is paying dividends, with an improvement in local, regional and international trade already evident.

Prices of goods have generally stabilised while cross-border trade has increased.

The Second Republic, led by President Mnangagwa, has invested significantly in infrastructural development as a key enabler to economic transformation, despite limited access to external lines of credit.

So far, more than 50 000km of roads have been rehabilitated while 2 000 structures have been attended to since the start of the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP2) in 2021.

Zimbabwe has an estimated road network of about 90 000km, out of which 93 percent was in fair or poor condition and in need of rehabilitation or periodic maintenance.

Government is also in the process of negotiating with potential investors for the rehabilitation of some of the country's roads.

Just recently, Government rolled-out another massive road restoration exercise.

The initiative is targeting not only targeting highways, but also communities and feeder roads to ensure no one and no place is left behind.

Negotiations between the Government and a potential investor for the rehabilitation of the Harare-Nyamapanda Highway and the Nyamapanda Border Post are also underway.

The 235,8km Harare-Nyamapanda highway, which links Zimbabwe with Mozambique and Malawi, has been affected by an increase in traffic, especially haulage trucks transporting black granite from Murehwa and Mutoko.

Government has prioritised rehabilitation of major highways that include the Harare-Masvingo-Beitbridge highway, where the reconstruction is almost complete, and the Harare-Chirundu highway, the northern leg of the same main north-south highway.

The Harare-Mutare dualisation is also in progress, with a 46km stretch between Harare and Marondera already completed and opened to traffic.

Many other key highways are being rehabilitated, including the Beitbridge-Bulawayo-Victoria Falls highway, as good roads are critical for the movement of goods.

The rehabilitation of the Harare-Beitbridge highway and modern-



Beitbridge Border Post has already been commissioned by the President and users of the busiest land border in the SADC region have commended the speed with which they are being cleared

isation of the Beitbridge Border Post to bring in efficient systems aimed at reducing or eliminating delays, are some of the signature projects of President Mnangagwa's administration.

The new-look Beitbridge Border Post was also recently transformed by Government in a private-public-partnership with the Zimborders Consortium.

Beitbridge Border Post has already been commissioned by the President and users of the busiest land border in the SADC region have commended the speed with which they are being cleared.

The project, which cost US\$300 million, has started bearing fruits, reducing the turnaround time for cargo clearance and the movement of human traffic.

Long delays, which resulted in cargo and people spending between three to seven days, had become synonymous with the country's busiest port of entry in the last decade.

Also, the Mbudzi traffic interchange is almost complete, as the Second Republic continues to score big on infrastructural development as envisaged by the National Development Strategy 1.

Mbudzi roundabout had been a major vehicle traffic choke-point in southern Harare before the Government committed resources to turn it into an interchange, as the Second Republic continues to upgrade infrastructure to cope with modern

demands and trends.

Some of the benefits of the project include de-congestion of the Mbudzi area by creating streamlined and efficient traffic flow, reducing transit time and accidents in the area.

The project is creating direct employment for over 700 employees and downstream activities for thousands others, while creating skills transfer and upgrade for the department of roads staff.

The US\$88 million Mbudzi interchange is at the intersection of Simon Mazorodze Road, Chitungwiza Road and High Glen Road in Harare.

Funding of the project is being done through local financial institutions, while the contractor for the project is a joint venture of three local road construction companies: Tensor Systems, Fossil Contracting and Masimba Construction, collectively coming under the banner of Tefoma Construction joint venture.

When complete, the world-class interchange being constructed under the ERRP, is expected to eliminate congestion at the point where two major highways meet the Beitbridge-Harare national highway, with the traffic circle that was deemed adequate a few decades ago, now totally overwhelmed.

Last week, Government opened to traffic the newly constructed Amalinda Bridge and a 1,6km stretch along Amalinda Road, a move which was hailed by motorists

and residents.

The bridge is one of the two more bridges that have been completed, taking the total to 13 out of the 15 needed for the Mbudzi Interchange and associated works south of Harare.

The other bridge is on the Harare Drive missing link and it has also been completed and will soon be opened to traffic.

Mbudzi interchange is made up of 15 bridges, with 13 directly on the interchange, and two more on Amalinda Road and Harare Drive. By September, 11 of the 15 bridges had been completed.

The Mbudzi Interchange is at the intersection of Simon Mazorodze, Chitungwiza and High Glen Roads that feed traffic from western Chitungwiza and many old and new suburbs into Harare city centre, as well as the heavy national and regional traffic on the Harare-Masvingo Highway.

Previously, the intersection was managed by a roundabout, but increasing traffic volumes caused congestion, especially during morning and evening peak hours.

Transport and infrastructural Development Minister Felix Mhona recently stressed that the country's largest single road interchange was being steadily constructed as part of the continuous upgrade of the entire road system.

He reiterated that they will attend to all roads countrywide.

The rehabilitation of the Hara-

re-Beitbridge highway and modernisation of the Beitbridge Border Post to bring in efficient systems aimed at reducing or eliminating delays, are some of the signature projects of President Mnangagwa's administration.

The entire north-south corridor has been divided into three sections: the 580km Harare-Masvingo-Beitbridge highway together with eight toll plazas, the 342km Harare-Chirundu highway with six toll plazas, and the 59km Harare Ring Road with three toll plazas.

These tolls are aimed at paying for the rehabilitation and maintenance of roads.

RGM International Airport

In July, President Mnangagwa commissioned the new-look US\$153 million Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport, as the Second Republic continues to deliver key projects in line with the country's vision of attaining an upper middle-income economy by 2030.

The RGM International Airport has since been handed over to the Airports Company of Zimbabwe (ACZ) by the contractor, China Jiangsu International-RGM Airport Project.

President Mnangagwa said the completion of the expansion of the airport was evidence that the Second Republic was walking the talk in modernising and industrialising the country for the achievement of Vision 2030.

He described the new airport as magnificent.

The airport will become a regional aviation hub able to handle about 6 million passengers annually, from the present 2,5 million.

The upgrading of the RGM International Airport is also expected to see more international airlines opening routes into Harare and a corresponding increase in tourist arrivals.

Infrastructure development is at the heart of the Second Republic, which is in line with the aspiration of attaining an empowered upper middle income society.

Government recently said Zimbabwe had prioritised infrastructural development by committing local resources towards the completion of a 580km world-class highway along the North-South corridor which links to the modernised Beitbridge Border Post, which was completed in the first quarter of this year.

Government said it was committed to cooperation under the United Nations System and the adoption of international good practices and standards in transport connectivity and sustainable mobility.

Some of the life-changing interventions by the Second Republic in sectors such as health and agriculture



Some of the life-changing interventions by the Second Republic in sectors such as health and infrastructure



Dams to anchor rural development



Lake Gwayi-Shangani requires US\$48 million to complete the dam wall



Chivhu Dam will improve food security in Mashonaland East through irrigation support

Farirai Machivenyika
Senior Reporter

THE coming in of the Second Republic saw an exponential growth in infrastructure development following years of stagnation which led to a drop in economic growth as investors shied away from the country.

The Second Republic under the leadership of President Mnangagwa, has set out to reconstruct the economy through dam construction among other infrastructure development projects as the country strives to catch up with its regional peers.

Given the vagaries of weather due to climate change, irrigation development has become central to the fight against food shortages and hunger making water harvesting through dam construction critical.

Under Government's Vision 2030 at least 350 000 hectares should be put under irrigation to make the country food secure in light of climate change induced droughts.

In a recent interview at Kunzvi Dam, during a nationwide tour of dam construction projects by the Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, Zimbabwe National Water Authority director of engineering and hydrological services, Engineer Takudza Makwangudze said the dams will anchor rural industrialisation in line with President Mnangagwa's drive of achieving an upper middle-income society by 2030.

Some of the dams and lakes under construction include Kunzvi Dam in Mashonaland East's Goromonzi District, Semwa Dam in Mt Darwin, Lake Gwayi-Shangani in Matabeleland North.

"The dam construction projects will not only provide potable water for domestic use, but will drive the Government's rural industrialisation policy through establishment of irrigation schemes and related downstream industries," he said.

Under the new thrust by Government, dams, especially the ones currently under construction should not only provide water for domestic uses,

but also electricity generation, establishment of fisheries and tourism and recreational facilities.

Eng Makwangudze said the establishment of rural industries will also stem the rural to urban migration adding that the establishment of 35 000 village business units under the President's Vision 2030 Accelerator Model will also benefit from the dams.

Kunzvi Dam is now 53 percent complete and will also provide potable water for local communities and Harare Metropolitan province.

The Kunzvi Dam project will also see the construction of a water treatment plant and support approximately 500 hectares of land under irrigation.

At the construction site of Semwa Dam, Eng Makwangudze said the Second Republic had made great efforts in funding dam construction projects across the country some of which had stalled due to lack of funds.

The construction of Semwa Dam began in 2012 with little progress being made until 2018 with the coming in of the Second Republic under the leadership of President Mnangagwa.

Eng Makwangudze acknowledged the efforts of the Second Republic.

"Most of the activities you will see got resources in the past five years were there was a lot of interventions from the Second Republic," he said.

The dam will also provide potable water for Mt Darwin and Rushinga Business Centres.

The flagship project that has experienced significant progress since the coming in of the Second Republic is the Lake Gwayi-Shangani which is over 70 percent complete and has been on the cards since 1912.

The project will not only resolve, Bulawayo's long standing water woes, but support 10 000 hectares of irrigation in Hwange, Binga and Lupane Districts and communities living along the pipeline that draws water from Zambezi River to Gwayi-Shangani.

At least US\$48 million is needed for the dam wall to be completed and

start impounding water, while overall, US\$84 million will be required to complete the dam superstructure, completion of the power house for the hydro-electricity plant and the first pump house that would be used to pump water to the City of Bulawayo.

"We have made remarkable progress on the dam as you can see. We have received support from Treasury which, we continue to request. What I would want to say is that for this dam to be successfully completed, we need continuous disbursement of at least US\$4 million every month and this will allow us to do two metres of the wall every month (until its complete)," Eng Makwangudze said.

So far, 39 metres of the dam have been constructed from the 72 metres to be done when it's completed.

"However, seeing the delays in terms of disbursement, we are saying for the dam to be functional and start impounding water, we need about US\$48 million and if it is going to be disbursed in 2025, then we know come the end of 2025 we will have completed.

"But if we are going to complete all the works associated with the dam component of the project, we will require US\$84 million," he said.

Chairman of the Portfolio Committee, Cde Felix Maburutse thanked President Mnangagwa and the Second Republic for ensuring the project takes off after prolonged delays.

"We thank the President for his visionary leadership that ensured the construction of the dam takes off. We will also lobby Treasury as a Committee to ensure that the funds that are required are released for the completion of the project," he said.

Other dams that have been completed under the Second Republic include Muchekera that is at the border of Mashonaland East and Manicaland provinces and Chivhu Dams.

As part of efforts by the Government to address greater Harare's water woes, US\$2,4 million has been released for the first phase of the construction of the 26km pipeline drawing water from Muchekera Dam

to Wenimbi Dam for onward conveying to Harare.

The 26km pipeline will cost US\$19,1 million and will draw 30 megalitres from Muchekera Dam to Wenimbi Dam and will be pumped further to Prince Edward water treatment plant on the border between Harare and Chitungwiza. The twin small dams supplying Prince Edward treatment plant, Harava and Seke, normally run dry before the upper Manyame River starts flowing in the next season.

Prince Edward has already been shut down due to lack of raw water from the two dams.

Another successful dam project which reflects Government's ambition to provide multi-purpose dam is Chivhu Dam.

The dam which was commissioned last year together with a water treatment plant, will ensure the town's potable water supply will be secure for the next 30 years and an irrigation scheme which has had good winter wheat harvests for two years running.

Chivhu Dam resident engineer, Samuel Tsuro, confirmed the expected bumper harvest in an interview on the sidelines of the tour by the committee.

"We have earmarked 120 hectares for the irrigation scheme, but the production this year is from 105 hectares, the other 15 hectares still have some resettlement issues; there are still some homesteads in the fields so we did not use all the land for irrigation," he said.

"We are expecting between 500 and 600 tonnes of wheat. Last year, we did 400 tonnes, but due to improvements in farming techniques and soil management, we expect to get at least five tonnes per hectare, which will come to at least 500 tonnes."

The irrigation scheme, which was created from a cooperative of about 40 households affected by the dam construction, is coordinated by various entities in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development that include Zinwa, Agriculture Rural Development Authority (ARDA), Grain Mar-

keting Board and Agritex.

At Lake Mutirikwi in Masvingo, the 5MW hydro-electronic power station is complete and is now going through tests before synchronisation into the national power grid.

Site manager for Great Zimbabwe Hydro Power Company, Engineer Osteen Chiboora told the committee that the project was now in the home stretch.

"We are developing a 5MW plant at Lake Mutirikwi. With our project, we have moved significantly and we are now at 97 percent complete," he said.

Eng Chiboora said the project started with the completion of the access road followed by the construction of the transmission line and main civil works.

"So, these works are substantially complete that is why we are saying we are 97 percent complete," he added.

Engineer Chiboora said the power plant has reached the commissioning stage.

"The stage we are now on is what we call commissioning. We started with dry commissioning which is now 100 percent done and now we are starting wet commissioning where we will actually be running the plant at the same time synchronising it with the Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZETDC).

"When the synchronisation is successful, then we are ready to deliver power into the national grid. In the coming two weeks we will likely finish all these processes," he said.

He added that the 5MW of electricity to be generated at the mini-hydro plant is adequate to power Masvingo domestic uses.

The Government has since announced plans to have a second 5MW plant further downstream to take the power output along Mutirikwi River to 10MW.

The dam construction projects which are part of wider Government's efforts have shown the authenticity of President Mnangagwa's rallying call that "Nyika inovakwa ne vene vayo/ Ilizwe lakhiwa ngabanikazi balo," while leaving no place and no one behind.

Mat North civil servants move to Lupane



The Welshman Mabhena Provincial Government Complex

Peter Matika

CIVIL servants from Matabeleland North have been relocating from Bulawayo to the provincial capital, Lupane, in line with the recent Cabinet resolution and transition deadline.

A large number of the civil servants have already made Lupane their new home after they transported their belongings to the new station, with some having completed the transition, while others are still moving.

Most civil servants' houses in Lupane have already been fully occupied and connected to electricity and water.

The Welshman Mabhena provincial Government complex has also been fully electrified and has running water and 24-hour security.

However, some civil servants are still operating from Bulawayo pending completion of final touches at the Government complex.

Outstanding works include painting, inspection of power connections for safety and security systems.

The relocation process was initially set to be completed by September 1, but there were minor logistical setbacks.

However, Government officials have assured the public that the final push to relocate was cer-

tain in line with the directive to ensure decentralised administrative functions and enhancing impactful development of the provincial capital.

Minister of State for Presidential Affairs in the Office of the President and Cabinet, Lovemore Matuke, recently met with his Matabeleland North counterpart, Richard Moyo, in Lupane together with senior civil servants to assess the development progress there and the entire province.

He also conducted a tour of the Government complex and the civil servants' houses and expressed satisfaction with the level of commitment by Government employees and their willingness to develop the region.

"I am happy and impressed with the level of dedication towards the completion of these projects. This shows that as a nation we are rallying each other to attain Vision 2030," said Minister Matuke.

"It's prudent for all of us to ensure that we build our nation. We should do this so that our citizens in line with the mantra 'Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo'." he said.

"We have to work really hard in order to achieve Vision 2030 two years ahead of schedule in 2028 as proclaimed by our visionary leader, His Excellency, the Pres-

ident, Dr E.D Mngagwa.

"I am glad that as we started the year 2024, our ministry received its approved mandate, whose bulk of it entails working with Provincial Ministers of State and Devolution."

While providing continuous and timely advice to the Presidency concerning the state of affairs in all provinces, he said cooperation between their office and Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and the party, ZANU PF, was critical.

Minister Matuke said his portfolio has been mandated to monitor provincial economic development, stating that President Mngagwa directed that all provinces must convene special meetings of Zanu PF structures, beginning with the Provincial Coordinating Committees, down to the cells to discuss pertinent economic policies, programmes and projects.

"This is in line with the Second Republic's shift towards economic development, production and productivity. To that effect, all provinces are now to hold quarterly provincial coordinating meetings with a special focus on economic development together with the provincial development committee led by the minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution," said Minister Matuke.

He said Government was the implementing arm of party policies and that his ministry was there to act as a link between the party and government.

"This way, we ensure that the party election manifesto, as well as conference and congress resolutions are implemented," said Minister Matuke. He urged heads of departments to maintain constant communication with their provincial line ministries to ensure smooth sailing of development programmes and projects under the devolution agenda.

Minister Matuke Government will soon be developing a tracking system to ensure that all development programmes and projects meet expectations.

The construction of the Welshman Mabhena Complex began in 2012, following Lupane's designation as the provincial capital of Matabeleland North in 1999.

The relocation process gained momentum after a Cabinet meeting, during which Vice-President Kembo Mohadi presented a report on the state of readiness for the move. VP Mohadi had visited Lupane Centre on June 20 to assess the readiness of civil servant housing units and Government complex offices, as well as to check on the progress of the Lupane Provincial Hospital construction.

The move to Lupane is expected

to significantly reduce transportation costs for residents, particularly those from remote districts such as Hwange, Binga and Nkayi, who previously had to travel long distances to access services in Bulawayo.

Matabeleland North had long been considered one of the most marginalised in the country, but it had seen significant development under President Mngagwa's administration, including the Lake Gwayi-Shangani, the US\$1,5bn Hwange Power Station expansion and various mining and power generation initiatives.

More developments in Lupane Lupane is also witnessing substantial growth with new infrastructural developments such as the Lupane Provincial Hospital, an e-passport office and Lupane State University.

Once completed, Lupane Provincial Hospital will be the first health institution in the province to accommodate all its personnel on-site and is also set to train health specialists.

Moreover, the Government has completed the reconstruction of the Pupu Battlefield National Monument and clinic, both of which were commissioned by President Mngagwa.

The initiatives are part of broader efforts to drive economic growth in Lupane, a district rich in timber, gold and methane gas.

Huge investment transforms health sector

Rumbidzayi Zinyuke
Senior Reporter

HEALTHCARE delivery is primed as one of the pillars that drive economic development, according to the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) and Vision 2030 of an empowered upper-middle income society.

Increasing access to health services for all citizens is central to universal health coverage, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised people in communities.

However, with some rural communities previously having less access to health facilities owing to long distances being travelled to the nearest health centre, the Second Republic has prioritised the health sector to improve the lives of people.

Addressing healthcare inequalities that have existed for decades has been critical in ensuring every Zimbabwean accesses health services.

Infrastructure development

Zimbabwe's healthcare sector has not been without challenges, including periodic funding shortages, brain-drain and the impact of economic challenges.

However, the Government, in collaboration with international partners, has continuously endeavoured to overcome the obstacles, focusing on improving healthcare for all citizens.

Since 2018, the Ministry of Health and Child Care has made significant strides in the development of health infrastructure, with more than 50 health facilities constructed and completed.

Nearly 100 others were renovated, while solar systems were installed at 1 074 health facilities, while more than 400 health facilities benefitted from borehole sinking projects.

Notably, more than 65 provincial and district hospitals have become operational.

In the past few years, President Mnangagwa's Government has undertaken to construct health centres closer to the people as a way of ensuring universal health coverage.

A total of 30 health centres with 22 beds and five district hospitals with 60 beds, are being constructed across the country.

The majority of the modern facilities are expected to be located in far to reach areas, improving access to health services for most communities.

All the facilities are self-sustaining with a full solar system, accommodation units for the staff who will be stationed there and they have brick incinerators and water reservoirs.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the challenges that already existed in the healthcare system, particularly in access to health services for underserved communities, Government made efforts to address the challenges and ensure universal access to health care.

Under the devolution programme, local authorities across the country were afforded an opportunity to boost health service delivery, particularly in rural areas where mil-

lions of Zimbabweans had been left out due to lack of facilities.

Most local authorities channelled a significant chunk of those funds towards health service delivery, a development which saw clinics being built, upgraded and equipped in all provinces, to offer better health care to the population.

Health workforce

While the health service has been affected by skills flight over the past years, the Government has been making significant efforts to increase the number of medical professionals and improve their training and skills.

This is witnessed by the establishment of medical schools, nursing colleges, and other healthcare training institutions, which have played a vital role in uplifting the country's healthcare sector. The government has also implemented various measures to attract and retain healthcare professionals by offering non-monetary incentives and benefits.

These are some of the gaps that were identified in the Health Workforce Strategy (2023-2030), which was launched recently in conjunction with the signing of the Health Workforce Compact (2024-2026) between several government ministries and development partners.

The compact, developed jointly by the Government and development partners with technical support from the World Health Organisation (WHO), aims to accelerate country's aspiration of attaining a Universal Health Coverage (UHC) service coverage of at least 80 index points and ensure the availability of a resilient, motivated, and fit-for-purpose health workforce.

The health workforce currently stands at 47,5 percent of the optimal capacity.

Through the Health Service Commission, Government is seeking to scale up recruitment of health workers to close the staffing gaps that had long hindered service delivery.

This will see the commission doubling the workforce by creating and sustaining at least 32 000 additional jobs while reducing health workforce attrition by 50 percent through various interventions.

By creating 32 000 public health jobs by 2030, it is believed that this will potentially stimulate an additional 100 000 jobs in the broader economy.

Preventive healthcare

Emphasising preventive healthcare, Zimbabwe has implemented effective disease control programs. This includes vaccination campaigns, targeted initiatives to combat prevalent diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. Through these interventions, the country has successfully reduced the incidence of several infectious diseases and achieved a significant improvement in public health.

Between 2020 and 2022, Zimbabwe recorded a 68 percent decline in Malaria cases and a 55 percent decline in deaths owing to targeted interventions that were made.

While malaria continues to be a



Cowdray Park Health Centre

public health concern, with close to 68 percent of Zimbabwe's population residing in malaria risk areas, Government has been making an effort to eradicate the disease.

This is being done through strategies which include Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), the use of Long-lasting Insecticidal nets (LLINS), Intermittent Preventive Treatment in Pregnancy (IPTP), use of efficacious medicines to treat malaria, advocacy and community engagement, and epidemic preparedness and response.

Zimbabwe was also among the first few African countries to achieve the UNAIDS 95 95 95 global target in the fight against HIV and Aids to ensure that 95 percent of people infected know their status, are on treatment and have suppressed viral load.

There have been numerous other milestones in the fight against other diseases of public health concern.

Medical research

Advancements in medical research and technology have also contributed to the remarkable progress in Zimbabwe's health sector. The country has collaborated with international partners and institutions to conduct research on various diseases, leading to the development of new treatment protocols. Furthermore, the adoption of modern medical technologies has enhanced diagnosis, treatment, and patient care, significantly improving medical outcomes.

For instance, the treatment of Tuberculosis in Zimbabwe has undergone a tremendous transformation over the years contributing to better outcomes for the national TB control programme.

For the drug susceptible TB, fixed dose combinations have been introduced and people no longer have to take tablets for up to two years with daily injections but the period has been reduced to about six months.

The country had also introduced child friendly formulations, which are flavoured to make them palatable for young children.

Zimbabwe has also introduced the administration of the Cabotegravir long-acting (CAB-LA) injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis as one of the HIV prevention products avail-

ble under a research study.

The CAB-LA became the third PrEP product to be introduced this year in demonstration sites under the Catalysing Access to New Prevention Products to Stop HIV (CATALYST) study.

E-Health

Government successfully rolled out the Impilo electronic health system (EHR) across the country which has since gained momentum on the back of the installation of solar systems in health facilities to provide constant connectivity for digital health solutions.

This was done with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Fund to install solar systems at more than 1000 health centres to ensure all facilities have power back up.

The EHR is a data collection and management system that seeks to improve the efficiency of healthcare delivery and reduce errors, particularly in areas where paper records are still in use.

The system allows for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of health data which can help to identify health trends, track disease outbreaks, and inform healthcare policy.

The national telemedicine project has also been rolled out, as the Second Republic moves to ensure universal access to health services.

The project, which is being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Child Care together with the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, is funded by Potraz targeting 173 health institutions.

Telemedicine is the use of electronic and telecommunication technology to deliver clinical care remotely, ensuring that people receive healthcare when needed, especially for those with limited access.

Another milestone is the implementation of an enterprise resource management (ERM) at the National Pharmaceuticals Company (Natpharm), a system which seeks to improve the management of vital medicines in the country.

Implementation of the system,

Microsoft Business 365, started in 2022 with support from the USAID to close the gaps that were identified in the medical commodity supply chain.

Natpharm procures medicines and medical supplies for all public health institutions and mission hospitals in Zimbabwe and has six warehouses in Harare, Bulawayo, Chinhoyi, Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare.

However, owing to an outdated system, the organisation was experiencing challenges that included drug leakages, stock outs as well as expiry of medicines before they were dispensed.

This is in line with modern technology and allows NatPharm to track medicines from where they are to where they are supposed to go to ensure medicines are not lost in the process.

Open heart surgery

Under the Second Republic, the country resumed open heart surgeries at Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals last year after a four year break that was necessitated by a shortage of consumables needed for the procedure. The last open heart surgery to be conducted in Zimbabwe was in October 2018 and since then, patients had to travel to India and other countries to get the procedure.

As the Second Republic has moved to improve healthcare service delivery for all, Government has committed to reviving the programme which will see heart patients getting open heart surgeries locally instead of travelling to India and other countries. To date, nearly 40 patients have had access to the life-saving operation.

There are numerous other interventions that have made an impact in the lives of millions of Zimbabweans.

These strides made in the health sector stand as a testament to the Second Republic's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its citizens.

The continued efforts and partnerships with international allies are crucial in sustaining and further enhancing the gains achieved, ultimately striving towards a healthier, prosperous nation.



Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme to benefit 3,5 million farmers this summer cropping season

Food security: Agric support continues

Sikhulekelani Moyo

SUPPORTING agriculture has been one of the Government's top priorities since 2018, a development that has improved yields and ensured the country had a surplus for three consecutive seasons.

It was only in the 2023/2024 summer cropping season that the nation's march towards food self-sufficiency had glitches following low rains due to the El Nino phenomenon that swept across large parts of Southern Africa.

With normal to above normal rains expected in the forthcoming 2024/2025 summer cropping season, Government has declared that it will support three million farmers under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa Programme, as it moves to boost food security and improve livelihoods amid the challenges brought about by climate change.

The commitment follows a positive meteorological forecast released during the 29th Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-29) last August.

Farmers are feeling energised and are already preparing land for the upcoming season. The distribution of inputs has already begun at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) depots across the country.

As dry conditions in places such as Matabeleland continue, experts recommend that farmers consider cultivating traditional grains that are drought tolerant.

During the recent Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) 84th Congress held in Bulawayo, Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and



Farmers feeling energised and are already preparing land for the upcoming season

Rural Development Minister, Dr Anxious Masuka, spoke about the multifaceted issue of food security, which involves economics, nutrition and community resilience.

At the congress, which was held under the theme, "Family Farming and the Food Security Nexus", Minister Masuka who was represented by Deputy Minister Vangelis Haritatos said Government's support for smallholder farmers was crucial in ensuring a steady supply of diverse, nutritious food, expanding market access and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

"In terms of Zimbabwe's climate-proofing thrust for food secu-

rity and enhancing rural livelihoods in the face of climate challenges, Government has adopted a two-pronged approach to climate-proof production through climate-proofing at the household level," said Dr Masuka.

He said during the 2024/2025 cropping season, Government will be supporting three million farmers under the climate-proofed food production scheme and these are made up of A1, small-scale commercial farmers, old resettlement farmers and 500 000 peri-rural farmers.

Minister Masuka said challenges faced by farmers, include limited

access to resources, technology and finance.

He said addressing these challenges is key to unlocking the country's full food security potential.

Dr Masuka said the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme will be guided by agro-ecological considerations, with specific crop support tailored to the environmental conditions of different regions.

He said farmers in more favourable ecological zones will receive maize seeds while those in drier regions like Matabeleland will be provided with traditional grain seeds more adaptable to their conditions.

This will see farmers from ecological Regions 1, 2 and 3 receiving maize seeds while farmers in Regions 4 and 5 will receive traditional grain seeds which are more suited and adaptable to their climatic demands.

Irrigation is also seen as a vital long-term solution to climate challenges. Government aims to expand summer irrigation to cover 350 000 hectares by 2027 and 90 000 hectares are expected to be ready by the 2024/2025 season.

Food security at family level key
Addressing the congress delegates, ZFU secretary-general, Mr Paul Zakariya said it was important to enhance food security at family level.

"In a world grappling with a myriad of challenges, from climate change to economic uncertainty, the significance of family farming cannot be overstated.

"Family farmers are the vanguards of biodiversity, the architects of sustainable practices and the champions of resilience in the face of adversity," said Mr Zakariya.

The congress was held in Bulawayo in honour of the late former ZFU president, Major (Rtd) Abdul Nyathi, whose passion for family farming inspired this year's theme.

Mr Zakariya said preparations for the 2024/2025 cropping season are well underway and many small-scale farmers are already receiving inputs.

"We are already on the ground, the smallholder farmers in most cases are done in terms of potholing, and Pfumvudza inputs," said Mr Zakariya.

Traversing wheat production landscape under Second Republic

Edgar Vhera

Agriculture Specialist Writer

Wheat self-sufficiency was the Second Republic's top priority and this was successfully attained in 2022.

The success in the wheat production was followed by the current push to substitute imports with locally produced wheat products.

Justifiably, the Second Republic is now on the cusp of getting wheat exports underway to generate foreign currency.

This comes, as the country's wheat area rose by 412 percent from 23 820 hectares in 2019 to 121 982ha this year.

In terms of production, wheat production surged 500 percent from 100 044 tonnes in 2019 to the expected 600 000 tonnes this year as a result of increased productivity.

To add impetus to its export push, Government this year availed incentives to encourage production of the cereal and achieved 100 percent of the targeted 120 000ha.

With good agronomic practices (GAP), farmers can score more than 600 000 tonnes of wheat at an average yield of over five tonnes per hectare.

The annual national wheat consumption stands around 360 000 tonnes leaving a balance of 240 000 tonnes as excess, which can be exported to regional countries in need.

Annual wheat production in Zimbabwe has been hovering above 50 000 tonnes between 1980 and 2007 and remained around the 50 000 tonnes mark over the period 2008 and 2016.

It recorded a 368 percent spike from a low of 100 044 tonnes in 2019 to last year's 467 905t.

Economic importance of wheat

In Zimbabwe wheat is the second most important strategic food security crop after maize.

It is mainly used as a human food in the form of bread, paste products, breakfast cereals, cake and many others. Wheat is an active contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The immediate wheat products are flour and bran.

Flour is the main ingredient for making bread and other confectioneries consumed daily by most people while wheat bran is mainly used in the stockfeed manufacturing sector.

Over the years, demand for wheat has been rising due to increases in population growth, urban populations and changes in consumer tastes and preferences, thereby outstripping supply.

This necessitated imports to fill the gap while hard wheat also required to improve the glistening of the local wheat product.

Wheat imports involve the expenditure of foreign currency, hence the call by Government for farmers to increase production as a healthy way of import substitution.

The geopolitical developments in

Eastern Europe came as a blessing in disguise, as the country became inward looking and achieved self-sufficiency from local production.

What policies have led to increased wheat production?

The Government observed that there would be no wheat revolution without incentivising stakeholders in the wheat value chain.

The wheat value chain can broadly be grouped into five levels comprising input suppliers, producers, traders, processors and end markets consumers.

Presidential Input Scheme

In the 2022 production season, the Presidential Input Scheme initially set to contract 5 500ha of wheat wholly funded by Government to the tune of US\$9 293 820 but this was oversubscribed with 10 241 prospective farmers registering to plant the crop.

Government paid attention to the prospective farmers needs and increased the sponsored area to 10 000ha.

The same programme was rolled out up to this year and will continue into the future.

Setting production target

Government has been setting production targets starting with 75 000ha in 2022 winter wheat season as a bold move to achieve wheat self-sufficiency and 80 885ha were achieved.

In 2023 a target of 90 000ha was set and 90 192ha were planted, this was again repeated this year when Government planned 120 000ha with farmers planting 121 982ha.

National Enhanced Agriculture Productivity Scheme (NEAPS)

Commercial wheat production was boosted with farmers accessing funding from CBZ Agro Yield and AFC Land Bank. Government acquired equipment such as tractors, planters and combine harvesters to be administered through these two institutions.

Joint venture arrangements

Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development said the Joint Venture (JV) policy was also bearing fruit, as engagements between beneficiaries of the land reform and investors contributed to this increased wheat hectareage.

Uninterrupted electricity supply

Government took care of farmers' load shedding concerns by mandating the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) to ring-fence 120 megawatts of power for wheat production this 2023 and 2024 winter seasons.

Quelea bird control

Government intensified the control of quelea birds with the department of Migratory Pests and Biosecurity Control. The department was further capacitated this year to incorporate the use of drone technology in curbing the threat of the birds. The use of aerial technology in the form of calibrating planes will complement the drone technology alongside

motorised backpacks on mounted vehicles, traps and nets as part of an elaborated plan to bust the birds.

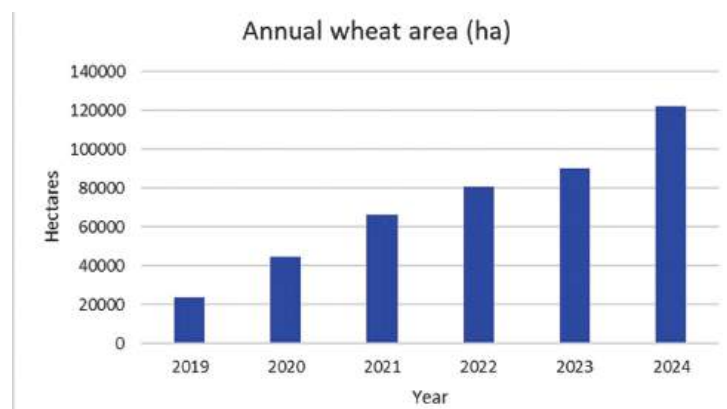
Pre-planting producer price setting

Government has been announcing lucrative pre-planting wheat producer prices to motivate farmers and allow them to make the right planting decisions.

For the 2022 season, Government set a pre-planting wheat floor producer price of \$175 741, 86 per tonne for ordinary grade at a 15 percent return on investment while the premium grade was \$193 316 per tonne to incentivise farmers to commit more land to winter wheat production.

The price was later reviewed the same year to US\$620 per tonne for ordinary grade wheat and US\$682 for premium grade.

Farmers were getting US\$200 plus \$243 680 for the ordinary grade and US\$220 plus 268 048 for the premium grade.



To preserve value, suspension of 20 percent of the compulsory liquidation portion on local nostro transfers for wheat farmers was introduced for both Government and contract-purchased crop. The two percent Intermediate Money Transfer Tax (IMTT) on nostro payments was also suspended for wheat farmers for the 2022 marketing season.

The 2023 winter wheat production season saw Government announcing a pre-planting producer price of US\$520 per tonne and for the 2024 season an incentive price of US\$440 has been announced.

Wheat trading on the Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange (ZMX) platform

Wheat and barley are among the list of 49 commodities that are currently being traded on the ZMX trading platform as a form of price discovery.

Self-financing

Individuals who are taking farming as a serious business are producing wheat for sale to Government, ZMX or other players using their own resources.

Private sector interventions

Government's call for private players to fund production of 40 percent of their annual raw material needs from local producers through contracting, joint ventures and corporate farming saw farmers under the Food Crop Contractors Association

(FCCA) grouping planting 15 500ha of wheat in 2021, 30 000ha in 2022, the same area in 2023 and 2024.

Success stories for wheat

A beneficiary of the land reform programme Mrs Zivai Memory Samudzimu of Pepsia Farm in Goromonzi in Mashonaland East said in the 2022 winter season she put 40ha under wheat and achieved an average yield of nine tonnes per hectare.

With Government addressing the electricity issue this year through ring-fencing of power supplies for wheat clusters, Pepsia Farm has increased area under winter wheat by 200 percent to 120ha.

"Guaranteed electricity supply by Government has allowed us to triple area under wheat to 120ha this winter season from 40ha last year. I expect the yield to exceed 9 t/ha this season," she said.

Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) president Mrs Monica Chinamasa who is producing

lands who started wheat production under the New Dispensation.

"I took hid of the Government's food security call and started wheat production in 2019 on 16ha scoring average yields of between seven to eight tonnes per hectare.

"This motivated me to double the hectareage to 32ha in 2020, then 60ha in 2021. I maintained 60ha for 2022 and was considering reducing it in 2023 due to power challenged but Government's assurance of reliable power supply made me retain the 60ha. I planted the same hectareage this year and my crop is looking good," Dr Chipunza said. In a clear testimony of the strength of JV arrangements, Mr Kane York from Mazowe has partnered a beneficiary of the land reform to increase wheat production.

Mr York said he paid attention to Government's Going4Growth mantra and advise on good agronomic practices as contained under the 4R (right seed, right input, right time and right placement) to plant his crop in the optimum May 1 to 15 period.

"We planted 195ha of wheat and we are targeting yields of 7.5 tonnes per hectare. This year has been the most successful since I started wheat farming. We have had consistent power supplies, which allowed smooth irrigation scheduling," Mr York said.

An A2 farmer from Farm 9, Chitomborwizi in Mashonaland West province, Mr Penikati Magwada said because of 2022 year's unrelenting power cuts, he had been tempted to reduce his hectareage but Government's assurances of reliable power supplies made him plant 220ha in 2023 and the crop harvested well.

"In 2022, I planted 140ha and got average yields of 4, 9 tonnes per hectare but in 2023 I had a better crop and even had a field day on my farm," he said.

Mr Mugwada said irregular power cuts of 2022 forced him to do irrigation only at night when he got electricity.

"I now have access to 24-hour electricity supply and can-do irrigation schedules during the day and at night," said Mr Magwada.

Small-scale farmers from Matabeleland South province's Arda Antelope Irrigation Scheme who produced very high wheat yields last year also have an exciting story to tell.

Twenty-year-old Ms Brenda Mkwanzani said: "I have been in wheat farming for four years. Last year I got 25 kilogrammes of seed, 12 bags of Compound D and 24 bags of Ammonium Nitrate (AN) for my one-hectare plot under the Presidential Input Scheme (PIS) and harvested 6, 9 tonnes from the plot.

"I sold the wheat to the GMB," she said. Another beneficiary of the Presidential Inputs Scheme, Senzeni Sibanda said she was given 25 kg of seed, eight bags of basal fertiliser and 12 bags of AN for her one-hectare plot and harvested 6, 5 tonnes of wheat, which she also sold to GMB.

2nd Republic in new tobacco record

Edgar Vhera
Agriculture Specialist Writer

THE success in the tobacco industry is another record in the bag for the Second Republic!

This time around the country has grossed US\$1,3 billion in tobacco exports in 2023, a 30 percent surge from US\$1 billion earned in 2022.

The Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) report showed that the average price of the crop has risen 18 percent from US\$4,51 per kilogramme in 2019 to US\$5,30 last year as a result of value-addition.

This comes on the backdrop of the crafting of new policies by the Second Republic, which set the industry on course to breaking the all-time tobacco production record of 296 000 tonnes of the crop recorded in 2023 that eclipsed the 259 000 tonnes scored in 2019.

Value addition

On one hand, the country's export earnings from value-added tobacco products also got a huge boost following the investment of over US\$20 million in a processing plant in Beatrice by a local tobacco company, Voedsel Group.

Cut Rag Processors also followed suit with a US\$120 million investment in the cigarette manufacturing plant which has capacity to see a jump of more than 40 percent of cigarette production.

The 14-tonne-per-hour tobacco processing plant is expected to be commissioned in December or January next year.

The new cigarette manufacturing plant and cut rag processing factory is aimed at increasing the processing capacity by 50 percent in the first half of next year.

Cut rag is tobacco processed and finely cut for use in cigarette manufacture.

The move resonates with Government's policy on promoting value addition and saw cigarette exports rising from three percent in 2018 to eight percent last year.

This is according to statistics from the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStats).

The country exported cigarettes worth US\$28 million in 2018 against total tobacco exports of US\$893 million. Last year the portion of cigarettes within the tobacco product exports rose eight percent to US\$106 million from a total of US\$1,3 billion.

Exports of unprocessed tobacco products have since dropped from 96 percent in 2018 to 88 percent last year.

Zimbabwe exports partly or whole stemmed/stripped tobacco or not stemmed/stripped tobacco as raw tobacco.

The country also exports tobacco refuse, cigars, cheroots and cigarillos containing tobacco, cigarettes and manufactured tobacco.

Cigarettes are representing value-added tobacco.

Portion of Tobacco exports contributed by Cigarettes: ZimStats

ZimStats statistics also reveal that the value of tobacco exports rose 55 percent from US\$838 million in 2017 to US\$1,3 billion last year.

The increased production of flue-

cured tobacco witnessed from 2017 to date portrays the success of the land reform programme due to sheer determination and gain in experience by the newly resettled farmers.

Volume and value of tobacco exports Source: Zimstats

Economic importance of tobacco The tobacco value chain contributes significantly to agriculture gross domestic product (GDP) and export revenues thereby aiding national economic growth.

Tobacco production supports up to 160 000 households and accounts for more than 50 percent of agricultural exports and between 14 and 20 percent of the agriculture GDP.

It also contributes between five and 10 percent of the national GDP.

Zimbabwe is ranked sixth after China, India, Brazil, the United States of America and Indonesia on the list of top tobacco producing countries based on 2022 tobacco production figures, though it still remains number one in Africa.

According to TradeMap, Zimbabwe was ranked number 15 in terms of world tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitute exports for 2022, having exported US\$998 million worth of tobacco with China, United Arab Emirates, Poland, Germany and Italy taking the first five slots in decreasing order.

Statistics availed by TIMB show that the Far East market was the largest consumer of Zimbabwean tobacco products accounting for over 40 percent of our export volume, with Africa and the European Union (EU) on second and third position at 20 and 16 percent respectively.

Last year, the Far East market accounted for 64 percent of the earnings followed by the EU and Africa at 14 and 12 percent respectively.

The Far East market had the largest average price of US\$7,19 with the EU and Africa coming second and third with US\$4,37 and US\$3,43 per kilogramme correspondingly.

Policies encouraging tobacco production

National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1 2021-25)

The National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1 2021-25) drafted in November 2020 outlined the strategies, policies, legal and institutional reforms and programmes plus projects that will be implemented over the five-year period, 2021-2025 towards achieving accelerated, high, inclusive, broad based and sustainable economic growth as well as socio-economic transformation and development.

Flue-cured tobacco production in the first four year of the crafting of the NDS1 has surpassed targets.

Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Plan (TVCTP)

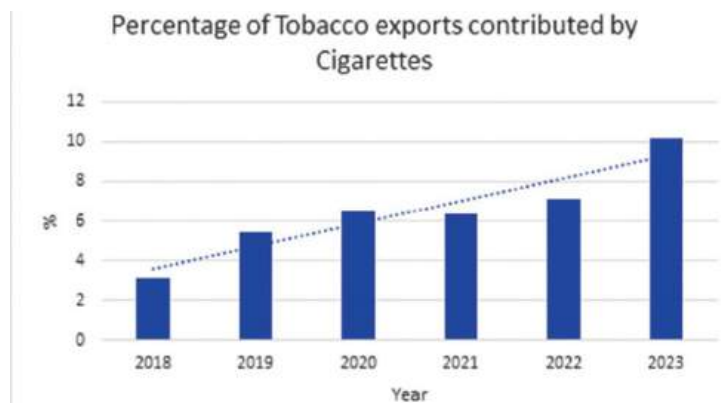
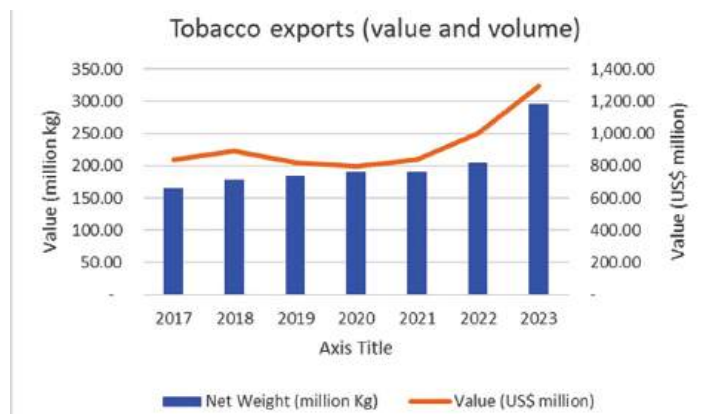
Government came up with the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Plan (TVCTP) in 2020, which seeks to achieve a US\$5 billion tobacco industry by 2025.

The TVCTP targets to achieve the following six objectives:

- sustainable intensification of tobacco production to 300 million kilogrammes;
- enhancing transparency and fair



A chongololo barn under construction at Mr Choto's farm



tobacco marketing;

- reforming, restructuring and rebuilding institutions to raise and optimise the net export benefits for tobacco from the current 12,5 percent to 70 percent by 2025;
 - increasing tobacco value addition and beneficiation from the current two to 30 percent by 2025 as well as to facilitate the production of alternative crops to tobacco to diversify and increase their contribution to farmer revenue and enhance traceability in the face of climate change and anti-tobacco campaigns.
- The implementation of the TVCTP by various players has led to an increase in tobacco production.

Monetary policy

In the October 2018 monetary policy statement, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) allowed tobacco farmers to retain 20 percent of their earned foreign currency in their nos-

tro accounts as a way of counteracting the increased quoting of goods and services in foreign currency.

The RBZ increased the foreign currency retention for tobacco growers to 30 percent in the 2019 monetary policy statement.

The 2022 monetary policy statement refined the export retention threshold to increase participation by small-scale growers and boost tobacco production in the country.

Accordingly, the retention threshold was increased to 75 percent for tobacco growers for the 2022 tobacco marketing season with the funds treated as free funds.

For the 2023 tobacco marketing season the RBZ increased the foreign currency payment to farmers from 75 to 85 percent with the remaining balance of 15 percent paid at the interbank rate.

For the 2023/24 tobacco marketing season, the RBZ has standardised the

surrender and retention portion to 75/25 and localised tobacco production financing by removing restrictions on the use of locally sourced funds to support the production of tobacco in the country.

In last year's mid-term monetary policy statement, RBZ governor Dr John Mangudya said locally sourced funds could now be used in funding tobacco production.

"In terms of Section 4 of the Exchange Control (Tobacco Finance) Order, Statutory Instrument 61 of 2004, tobacco merchants are required to source offshore financing to produce and buyback green leaf tobacco. Tobacco merchants who fail to secure offshore financing are required to apply to the RBZ for authority to raise funds on the local market. With immediate effect, there will be no restrictions on the use of locally sourced funds to support the production of tobacco in the country," said Dr Mangudya.

Tobacco success stories

An A2 farmer at Lochnager Farm in Muzarabani, Mr Masimba Charles Choto embraced advice from all tobacco value chain players from research, extension, input stockists, contractors and others after deciding to grow tobacco.

Mr Choto graduated from producing tobacco seedlings using the conventional method to the improved float tray production system in 2019.

Before using the float tray system, Mr Choto used to raise seedlings on an area large enough to cover 50 hectares.

Over the years, he achieved a maximum yield of 3,6 tonnes per hectare, which he plans to improve to four tonnes. "I installed a US\$360 000 seven-kilometre underground irrigation pipe to draw water from a dam seven kilometres from my farm. I also built three efficient tobacco curing Chongololo barns worth over US\$200 000 to cure my crop," he said.

The use of the Chongololo system has enabled him to save US\$45 000 per year.

A Chongololo barn under construction at Mr Choto's farm

He bought three brand new tractors and four cars using proceeds from tobacco — a Mazda T35 truck, Toyota Land Cruiser and Toyota Hilux. At peak period he employs up to 135 workers.

Even former farm workers have joined the bandwagon of success stories from the Government's land reform programme after forging partnerships with new farm owners.

A former farm worker at Glenluc Farm in Ward 15 of Chegutu, Mashonaland West, Mr Phillip Muchenga said although he did not own, he was growing tobacco.

Mr Muchenga bought a car, built a house and purchase four head of cattle from the plots he rents from A1 plot holders. Another former farm worker at Garvillan Farm in the same ward, Mr Lovemore Festo said he was producing tobacco on two hectares and produced 35 and 41 bales in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons respectively.

"I have managed to buy cattle, furniture, a fridge and wardrobe after selling the crop," he cheerfully said.

Revival of Bulawayo industries tops Govt priorities



General Beltings Holdings Limited group managing director Mr Joseph Gunda explains production processes to Special Advisor to the President on Monitoring Implementation of Government Programmes and Projects Joram Gumbo during a familiarisation tour

Peter Matika

THE revival of Bulawayo industries will continue to be supported by Government through continued implementation of sustainable ease of doing business reforms and initiatives that promote increased production capacity and export competitiveness.

Special Advisor to the President Responsible for Monitoring and Implementation of Government Programmes, Dr Joram Gumbo, who was in Bulawayo recently to tour General Beltings (GB) Holdings Limited, said the Second Republic through the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, has crafted strategies targeted at the revival of industries.

GB Holdings, one of the giant companies in Bulawayo, gained prominence for the production of conveyor belts during the pre and post-independence period.

But its operations were affected by the closure of indus-

tries because of various reasons, including the sanctions-induced economic hardships, said Dr Gumbo.

The conveyor belt manufacturing company requires at least US\$22 million capitalisation funding to modernise its plants and hopes to secure a loan from the Matabeleland Industries Retooling Facility.

Dr Gumbo said some of the measures to support local industries include the promulgation of Statutory Instrument 126 of 2014, which prohibits the importation of locally available rubber products under the Open General Import Licence, the setting up of a Distressed Industries Marginalised Areas Fund (Dimaf) and the Matabeleland Industries Retooling Loan Facility to financially assist distressed companies.

He said his engagement with captains of industry is to expedite project implementation for the accelerated attainment of Vision

2030.

“I have had the honour to monitor some development projects covering different sectors, especially those focused on the resuscitation of industries in this previously renowned industrial hub,” said Dr Gumbo.

“Government is looking to have a private sector led economy, which will lay the foundation for the achievement of Vision 2030.

“I would like to assure you that the Government will continue to provide an environment that is conducive for private sector led businesses to flourish,” Dr Gumbo said.

He said the global industry trends and patterns show that innovation and modernisation are critical if companies are to remain competitive.

“I am informed that GB Holdings requires funding to the tune of US\$22 million in order to modernise its plants among other endeavours,” said Dr Gumbo.

“It is our expectation that the application will be successful and thereby pave way for a serious implementation of the retooling programme.”

He said Government’s intention to strengthen the approach to industry operations would ensure that local entities do not lose market share, which might result in closure of business.

“My visit comes at a time when there is a profound decrease in manufacturing in the local market share for GB Holdings. I have been briefed that GB Holdings has been confronted with numerous challenges despite the establishment, resuscitation and expansion of mines across the country, which would ordinarily require belts,” said the minister.

“The challenges include stiff competition from cheap imports and limited access to foreign currency to import raw materials.”

Dr Gumbo said controlling cheap imports was critical to pro-

tect local firms and job retention while growing the economy.

“We, therefore, need to find sustainable strategies and initiatives of supporting our own local industries,” said Dr Gumbo.

“Indeed, only Zimbabweans can unlock growth, unleash potential and employment opportunities for our population.”

GB Holdings acting group managing director, Mr Joseph Gunda, said despite playing a key role in the economy, the company was facing a number of challenges that are affecting operations such as smuggling and importation of cheap conveyor belts.

“The company is a key player in reviving the economy. We manufacture original products that we export to other countries. We are competitive against South African bonafide companies,” he said.

“Our plea is to have the Government assist in capacitating the company, which is able to save forex and promote local products.”