Zimbabwe Council of Churches

VOICES OF HOPE NEWSLETTER

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2026 | 3RD QUARTER, 2026



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KUSHINGA RESILIENCE HUB OFFICIALLY OPENS IN MWENEZI



On 21 September 2026, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) was pleased to host two senior officials from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA).....**More on page 6**



STRENGTHENING EARLY ACTION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN GWANDA DISTRICT

When disaster strikes, the difference between recovery and ruin often comes down to a single factor which is time. Acting a week, even a day, before a hazard escalates can mean protected livestock, safeguarded crops, and communities that weather the storm rather than being flattened by it.....**More on page 3**

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WCC REAFFIRMS SOLIDARITY WITH ZCC THROUGH VISIT TO ZIMBABWE



WCC/ZCC delegation with President Emmerson Mnangagwa at State House in Harare

The World Council of Churches (WCC) reaffirmed its solidarity with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) through a visit to Zimbabwe from 21-24 July 2026, joining the ZCC's 48th Biennial General Assembly and engaging key national stakeholders on issues of peace, justice, governance and social cohesion.

The visit brought together the WCC and ZCC in a series of high-level engagements with His Excellency President Emmerson D. Mnangagwa, the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, civil society organisations (CSOs), the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD) and United Nations agencies. The engagements provided an opportunity to listen to different perspectives on Zimbabwe's current context, strengthen relationships across the ecumenical movement and explore the role of the Church in contributing to peace, justice and social cohesion.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ZCC's 48th Biennial General Assembly, WCC General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay described the delegation's presence in Zimbabwe as a solidarity visit with the Church in Zimbabwe. The delegation's participation in the General Assembly, held under the theme "Breaking Walls, Building Bridges and Projecting the Future," offered an important expression of the WCC's support to the ZCC and its member churches as they reflected on the Church's role in Zimbabwe's national life.

One of the key engagements during the visit took place at the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, where the ZCC and WCC delegation engaged Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi on a range of issues affecting Zimbabwe's governance and social fabric. The discussions explored matters relating to the independence of the justice system, access to justice and justice sector reforms, as well as gender justice and labour rights in the mining sector. The delegation and Ministry also reflected on issues of international law, Zimbabwe's role on the United Nations Security Council agenda, and opportunities for technology to strengthen justice delivery and improve access to justice. The engagement also provided an opportunity to discuss the implications of Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3 (CAA3) and the importance of safeguarding peace, unity and social cohesion amid concerns around growing national polarisation. The discussions also highlighted the importance of creating spaces for dialogue and engagement across different sectors of society.

In this context, the delegation affirmed the value of an inclusive national dialogue process as a pathway towards greater understanding, strengthened democratic institutions and a peaceful and inclusive society. For the Church, such dialogue provides an opportunity to bring people together across different perspectives and contribute to the search for common ground on

issues affecting the nation.

The government's response to Zimbabwean returnees from South Africa was also discussed, with emphasis on the importance of ensuring that returnees are treated with dignity and have access to the support they need as they reintegrate into their communities.

The engagement with the Ministry formed part of a broader programme of bilateral meetings during the visit. Through engagements with civil society organisations and United Nations agencies, the delegation listened to perspectives on Zimbabwe's governance, human rights, peace and social cohesion landscape. The meeting with the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations also provided an opportunity for Christian leaders to reflect on the role of the Church in responding to national challenges and contributing to peaceful and





Left: *WCC delegation pose for a photo at the UN offices after meeting with UN agencies.* ***Right:*** *WCC General Secretary addressing the ZCC General Assembly*

inclusive communities.

Together, the engagements demonstrated the importance of ecumenical solidarity and accompaniment in responding to complex national realities. For the ZCC, the visit strengthened its relationship with the wider ecumenical family while creating space for constructive engagement on issues central to its mission.

The visit also affirmed the role of the Church as a bridge-builder and platform for dialogue, particularly in a context where strengthening understanding, inclusion and social cohesion remains important to Zimbabwe's future.



WCC/ZCC delegation posing for a photo with the Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs during the WCC solidarity visit in Zimbabwe

As Zimbabwe continues to navigate questions of governance, justice, social cohesion and national development, the WCC visit provided space for listening, reflection and constructive engagement. It reaffirmed a shared commitment to a Zimbabwe in which justice is accessible, human dignity is upheld, differences can be addressed through dialogue, and communities can live together in peace.

More than a series of high-level meetings, the visit reflected the spirit of ecumenical accompaniment and solidarity - the global Church standing alongside the Church in Zimbabwe as it continues its work towards justice, peace and social cohesion.

ZCC'S 48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY USHERS IN NEW LEADERSHIP AND RENEWED COMMITMENT TO UNITY AND JUSTICE



Delegates and Observers to the 48th General Assembly following proceedings during the Assembly

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) ushered in a new chapter of ecumenical leadership during its 48th Biennial General Assembly, held from 21-24 July 2026 at Kentucky Hotel in Harare. Convened under the theme **"Breaking Walls, Building Bridges and Projecting the Future,"** the Assembly brought together leaders and delegates from ZCC's member churches, ecumenical partners, women and young people to reflect on the Church's journey, renew its leadership and strengthen its collective witness in Zimbabwe.

A key outcome of the Assembly was the election of new ZCC leadership, with Bishop Kenneth Sibanda assuming the Presidency alongside Vice President Bishop Dr Machinga. The Assembly also saw the election of new National Youth and Men's Ecumenical Fellowship leadership, as well as the commissioning of the Women's Ecumenical Fellowship and Local Ecumenical Fellowship leadership. This leadership renewal marked an important transition in the Council's governance structures, building on its achievements while setting a foundation for strengthening Christian unity and responding to the social and economic realities facing communities.

The Assembly was also a moment of honest reflection on the walls that continue to divide the Church and society. During the official opening worship service on 22 July, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) President Rev. Lydia Neshangwe challenged delegates to recognise that transformation must begin within the Church itself. *"We are the walls, the root cause of the walls, the accomplices of the wall building. If we are to break down the walls, we must start with ourselves,"* she said. Drawing from Ephesians 2:14-22, her message challenged the Church to confront exclusion, prejudice and divisions within its own structures while remaining a voice for reconciliation and justice in society.

The call for a united and prophetic Church was reinforced by World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, who encouraged churches in Zimbabwe to remain actively engaged in promoting peace, social cohesion, justice and sustainable development. His participation, alongside other regional and international ecumenical partners, reaffirmed the importance of solidarity and collaboration in responding to challenges confronting the Church and the nation.

Beyond the formal proceedings, the Assembly created opportunities for women, young people, men and grassroots ecumenical leaders to contribute to discussions on the future of the Council. Dedicated engagements explored leadership development, economic empowerment

and strengthening participation across the wider ecumenical movement.

A significant development was the integration of the fourth cohort of the Youth Leadership Development Programme (YLDP) into the General Assembly. Young delegates nominated by ZCC Member Churches participated in Assembly proceedings alongside church leaders, while engaging in dedicated sessions on leadership, civic participation, entrepreneurship and youth empowerment. This reflected ZCC's commitment to ensuring that young people are not merely observers of the Church's future but active contributors to shaping it.

The Assembly's Theology Conference further challenged churches to translate their commitment to equality into practical action. Discussions examined poverty, economic injustice, gender inequality and the exclusion of women and young people from leadership and decision-making. The adoption of the Theology Conference Outcome Statement affirmed the Church's collective commitment to addressing these barriers and strengthening inclusive leadership and participation.

Throughout the four-day gathering, delegates reflected on the importance of strengthening the Church's prophetic witness while building bridges across communities, generations and institutions.



ZCC women delegates and observers during dedicated side sessions for women leadership development alongside the 48th General Assembly



YLDP 4th Cohort posing for a photo on the sidelines of the General Assembly

The discussions reinforced the need for the Council to remain responsive to the realities facing Zimbabweans, particularly communities experiencing poverty, inequality, exclusion and other forms of injustice.

As the ZCC moves forward under its renewed leadership and the HEART Strategy (2026-2030), the 48th General Assembly stands as an important moment of reflection, transition and renewed commitment. Its message extends beyond the gathering itself: breaking walls requires confronting division and injustice, building bridges demands intentional collaboration, and projecting the future calls for leadership that listens, includes and serves.

STRENGTHENING EARLY ACTION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN GWANDA DISTRICT



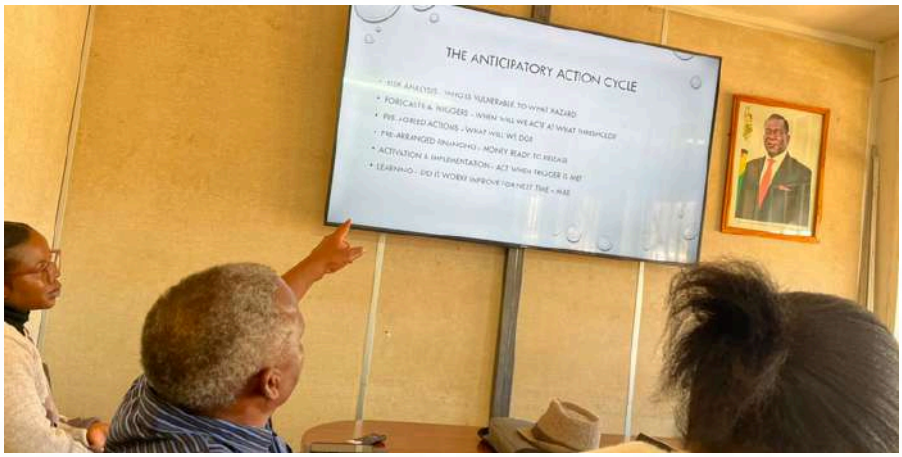
Gwanda District Civil Protection Committee during the training.

When disaster strikes, the difference between recovery and ruin often comes down to a single factor which is time. Acting a week, even a day, before a hazard escalates can mean protected livestock, safeguarded crops, and communities that weather the storm rather than being flattened by it. It was this principle of early action that brought together 25 members of the Gwanda District Civil Protection Committee for a two-day training on 4-5 August 2026, organised by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) under the Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptation (ECRA) Project, and facilitated by the Provincial Meteorology Office.

The training was built around a simple but powerful idea that scientific weather forecasting and community-held indigenous knowledge are not competing sources of information, but complementary ones. Participants explored how Indigenous Knowledge Systems can be integrated with modern Early Warning Systems to give communities a fuller, more locally grounded picture of approaching hazards, one that draws on generations of lived experience alongside meteorological data. Beyond forecasting, the sessions covered the practical architecture of resilience which is Anticipatory Action, which turns early warnings into early decisions before a crisis unfolds; Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, the broader framework for reducing vulnerability over time; disability inclusion, ensuring that preparedness planning leaves no one behind; and financial management and resource mobilisation, the often-overlooked mechanics that determine whether a good plan can actually be carried out when it matters most.

As part of the training, participants also reviewed key elements of the District Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction Plan, grounding the two days of learning in a document the committee will continue to use and refine going forward.

The message that ran through the entire training was clear that early warning is only useful if it leads to early action. A forecast that arrives on time but prompts no response protects no one. By equipping Gwanda's Civil Protection Committee with the knowledge, tools and inclusive frameworks to act decisively on the warnings they receive, this training is a concrete step toward communities that are not just informed, but genuinely prepared, inclusive and resilient in the face of climate-related hazards.





ZCC delegation meeting with the Resesrve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor

ZCC ENGAGES RBZ ON 2026 MID-TERM MONETARY POLICY REVIEW

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) engaged the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) on 24 July 2026 as part of the Bank's stakeholder consultations ahead of the Mid-Term Review of the 2026 Monetary Policy Statement, bringing the experiences and concerns of communities into discussions on the country's economic direction.

The engagement, chaired by the RBZ Governor and attended by members of the Bank's executive management, provided an opportunity for the ZCC to present its submissions on issues including the cost of living, confidence in the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG), access to affordable finance, financial inclusion, banking charges, informalisation and the implications of Zimbabwe's planned transition towards a mono-currency system.

The discussion also provided an opportunity to introduce the newly elected ZCC Presidium and reaffirm the Council's commitment to constructive dialogue with national institutions on policies affecting the wellbeing of Zimbabweans.

In responding to the ZCC submission, the RBZ Governor acknowledged the Church as an important stakeholder, noting that its presence across communities gives it a broad view of the experiences of households, businesses and different social groups. He also noted that recommendations previously made by the ZCC had informed earlier Monetary Policy Statements and welcomed the Council's continued evidence-based engagement.

The RBZ highlighted progress made in stabilising the economy, including mantaining single-digit inflation of approximately 4.4 percent, relative exchange rate stability, improved reserve accumulation and stronger coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities. At the same time, the Governor cautioned that the gains remain fragile and require continued policy discipline.

One of the key issues discussed was Zimbabwe's anticipated transition towards a mono-currency system. Responding to concerns raised by the ZCC, the Governor clarified that the transition would not be driven by a fixed date, but by economic conditions and public confidence. He said there would be no compulsory conversion of existing United States dollar deposits, foreign currency accounts or cash holdings, with any future transition expected to occur as citizens voluntarily increase their use of the ZiG.

The RBZ identified sustained low inflation, adequate foreign currency reserves, exchange rate stability, fiscal discipline, financial sector stability, efficient payment systems, policy consistency and public confidence as some of the conditions that would need to support such a transition. The Governor indicated that Zimbabwe has not yet reached that point, particularly given the current level of foreign currency reserves.

The issue of public confidence in the ZiG featured prominently in the discussion. The RBZ acknowledged that rebuilding trust remains a significant challenge, particularly given the experiences of previous currency reforms. The Bank pointed to policy consistency, transparency, regular publication of monetary statistics, public

communication, inflation expectation surveys and continued stakeholder engagement as part of efforts to build confidence over time.

The exchange rate was also discussed, with the RBZ defending the operation of the willing-buyer, willing-seller foreign exchange market. The Governor explained that rates are generated through an automated trading platform based on bids submitted by participating banks, rather than being manually set by the RBZ. On access to affordable credit, the RBZ agreed with the ZCC's call for gradual reductions in policy interest rates, while indicating that easing would need to remain measured. The discussion also highlighted the relatively low uptake of the Targeted Finance Facility despite reductions in lending rates. The Bank said it would assess the reasons for the limited uptake and consider whether further interventions were necessary to improve access to the facility.

Financial inclusion was another important area of discussion, particularly the challenges faced by women in the informal economy. The RBZ outlined initiatives including the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, the expansion of services through the Zimbabwe Women's Bank, financial and digital literacy programmes and the development of a movable collateral registry that can allow borrowers to use productive assets such as livestock and equipment as collateral. The ZCC welcomed these measures but also encouraged the RBZ to assess how accessible such facilities are to women at community level, noting that the existence of financial inclusion programmes does not necessarily mean that women are able to access them in practice.

Banking charges were similarly raised as a concern. The RBZ acknowledged the widespread concerns around the cost of banking and indicated that banks are gradually shifting their revenue models away from transaction fees towards lending activities. The Bank noted that continued monitoring and engagement with financial institutions would be necessary to balance affordability for customers with the sustainability of the banking sector.

The discussion also touched on Zimbabwe's highly informal economy. The RBZ acknowledged the scale of informal economic activity and indicated that improving macroeconomic stability and reducing pricing disparities could gradually reduce some of the incentives for operating outside the formal economy. The ZCC reiterated the importance of incentive-based approaches to formalisation that support livelihoods rather than relying primarily on punitive measures.



ZCC delegation meeting with the RBZ Governor

Beyond monetary policy, the engagement considered the role of sustainability and environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards in the financial sector. The RBZ indicated that banks are increasingly being required to incorporate sustainability considerations into lending decisions, particularly in sectors such as mining, with these standards expected to extend progressively to other financial institutions.

For the ZCC, the engagement demonstrated the value of bringing community perspectives into national economic policy discussions. While acknowledging progress towards macroeconomic stability, the Council continues to emphasise that economic stability must ultimately translate into improved livelihoods, greater access to opportunity and protection for vulnerable households. The engagement reaffirmed the commitment of both institutions to continued structured dialogue. Engagements such as these form part of ZCC's broader role in advocating for policies that uphold human dignity, promote inclusive development and contribute to the wellbeing of communities across Zimbabwe.

Guided by Christ's promise, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10), the Council continues to engage national institutions on policies that can contribute to an economy in which stability is accompanied by dignity, opportunity and sustainable livelihoods for all.

KUSHINGA RESILIENCE HUB OFFICIALLY OPENS IN MWENEZI



ZCC representatives and the Finland delegation, together with the Assistant Mwenezi District Development Coordinator (DDC) and Government stakeholders, pose for a group photo following a courtesy visit.

On 21 September 2026, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) was pleased to host two senior officials from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)- Ms. Tiina Kajakoski, Senior Advisor, Development Policy; Ms. Laura Taipalus, Desk Officer, Civil Society Unit; and Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) Manager for the Global Development Corporation Program, Ms. Tina Byring-Ilboudo. The delegation was in Zimbabwe on a Partner Monitoring visit. ZCC is implementing the Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptation Project in Zimbabwe (ECRA-Zim) in three districts in the southern regions of Zimbabwe with support from MFA through Felm. The Felm Country Representative for Zimbabwe, Ms Ruusa Gawaza, and Programme Officer Mr Josephat Mangunda accompanied the visitors.

The delegation witnessed the official opening of the Kushinga Resilience Hub in Mwenezi, Ward 14, and visited the Sonopi dip tank and Conservation agriculture plots. The visitors engaged with stakeholders and participants and learnt how communities in Mwenezi are fighting food insecurity and water shortages using underground water powered by solar technology. They learnt how solar energy is being harnessed to pump water from a borehole for multiple uses, which include feeding into a community garden, cattle drinking troughs, and community standpipes. The event was also marked by a tree-planting ceremony.

"This Hub represents a practical investment in *communities' ability to respond to climate challenges through water security, sustainable agriculture, smart energy, value addition and local knowledge,"* said Tiina Kajakoski, Finland Senior Advisor, Development Policy. *"We appreciate the partnership and the work being done to bring these elements together for the benefit of the community.We are glad to see evidence of collaboration and synergies between community members, local leadership, the Government of Zimbabwe, ZCC and Felm."*

ZCC Head of Programs for the Humanitarian Services and Diakonia, Ms Maria Tendai Dendere, praised ward 14 community members and local leaders for their commitment and towards the establishment of the hub. She thanked Felm and MFA for the solidarity and partnership.





Assets established at the Kushinga Resilience Hub.

"This Hub is more than water and agricultural production site. It is a community learning, production and value addition centre demonstrating how smart and renewable energy can support water supply, irrigation and processing, while indigenous knowledge informs practices such as fodder production, conservation agriculture and sustainable soil and water management. The goal is for communities to produce, process, add value and build more sustainable livelihoods as the climate changes."

Given the early warnings about the Super El Niño, the Resilience Hub is especially relevant and a lifeline for communities. Communities such as Muganda Village in Mwenezi suffer climate loss and damage, which opens the door to multiple challenges such as food, water, education, health, among others.

The delegation plated trees-A Baobab and a Musumha (Jackalberry). The Baobab stands for resilience, endurance, and adaptation to harsh climates. The Musumha stands for indigenous knowledge, local heritage and community livelihoods. Together, they represent resilience rooted in local knowledge and strengthened through partnership.

The delegation was also pleased to see the results from earlier phases of the partnership. This includes the Sonop Dip Tank, rehabilitated under the Felm and MFA-funded Scaling Up Livelihoods and Resilience Building Program. The dip tank is still functional and serves over 2,000 cattle from surrounding villages. An active community committee oversees maintenance and regular dipping, keeping herds healthy and controlling livestock diseases. They also spoke with Kenias Ngwenya, a project participant and Conservation Agriculture lead farmer. For four years Kenias has practised Conservation Agriculture and testified on the remarkable productivity of his CF plots. This season he has already completed 90% of land preparation.

ZCC is grateful to the Government of Finland, Felm, Government of Zimbabwe, traditional leadership and the Mwenezi community for the support and partnership.





The delegation interacting with the Garden participants.

ZCC BRINGS ECONOMIC JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE TO REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

"Recentring economic, social and cultural rights" requires more than recognising these rights in principle; it calls for the political will, leadership and systems needed to make them a reality in people's everyday lives. This was among the key reflections shared by Mr Admire Mutizwa, Head of Programme for

Church, Peace and Just Societies at the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), during a regional dialogue on the future of human rights in Africa.

The ZCC, represented by Mr Mutizwa, participated in the Southern Africa Convening on Reimagining the Future of Human Rights in Africa, held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 26-28 August 2026. He contributed to a panel on "Recentring Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Southern Africa," bringing the experiences and perspectives of communities into discussions on inequality, participation and inclusive development.

In his contribution, Mr Mutizwa highlighted the need for stronger political will to realise economic, social and cultural rights, emphasising that human rights commitments must translate into tangible improvements in people's lives. He also drew attention to Africa's position in the rapidly changing global science and technology landscape, calling for greater African leadership in the development and production of strategic technologies.

For Africa, he noted, the question is not simply how the continent can access new technologies, but how it can strengthen its own capacity to develop and produce technologies that respond to its needs and contribute to its development. This has implications for economic opportunity, livelihoods, education, participation and the ability of communities to shape their own futures.

Mr Mutizwa also emphasised the importance of accountable leadership and stronger regional and continental integration. His reflections pointed to the need for African countries to work together in responding to shared challenges and to strengthen institutions and systems that can advance the rights and wellbeing of people across the continent.

The three-day convening brought together human rights actors, civil society leaders, faith leaders, youth and other stakeholders from across Southern Africa to reflect on how the region can strengthen human rights protection and accountability in a changing environment. The dialogue was organised through a partnership between the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

Discussions explored questions of civic participation, economic justice, accountability and the future of human rights protection, while considering how the region can build a more inclusive, resilient and future-focused human rights agenda.

The ZCC's contribution placed economic and social rights within the broader realities faced by communities. Inequality, limited access to opportunities and the pace of technological change are not abstract issues; they influence people's ability to participate in society, secure livelihoods and enjoy their rights with dignity.

As a faith actor, the ZCC continues to bring the voices and lived realities of communities into national, regional and continental conversations on justice and human dignity. Its participation in the Gaborone dialogue reflects the Church's commitment to engaging questions that shape the wellbeing of people and communities, while contributing to conversations on peace, justice, social cohesion and inclusive development.

The dialogue also reinforced the importance of African voices in shaping the continent's human rights agenda. Reimagining the future of human rights requires not only responding to existing challenges, but also asking how African institutions, communities and leaders can shape the political, economic, technological and social conditions in which human rights can flourish.



ZCC HOP for Church, Peace and Just Societies speaking in a panel at the Southern Africa Convening on Reimagining the Future of Human Rights in Africa,

ZCC JOINS RCZ IN ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP AT 34TH SYNOD ASSEMBLY

A new chapter of leadership began within the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ) as the Church gathered for its 34th Synod Assembly on 29 August 2026, bringing together its members for worship, reflection and discernment on its calling

and mission.

A key moment of the Assembly was the election of a new Moderamen, led by Moderator Rev. Dr E. Baloyi, who will provide leadership and guidance to the Church as it continues its ministry and witness. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) joined the RCZ in ecumenical fellowship and solidarity, with Ms Maria T. Dendere, Head of Programme for Humanitarian Services & Diakonia, delivering the Council's greetings and solidarity message on behalf of ZCC General Secretary Rev. Wilfred Dimingu.

In the message, Rev. Dimingu celebrated the RCZ's longstanding contribution to the life of the Church and to Zimbabwean society. From evangelism and education to healthcare, community development and public witness, the RCZ has continued to contribute to the wellbeing of communities and to the broader ecumenical movement. As the Church begins a new chapter under its newly elected leadership, the ZCC encouraged the RCZ to continue strengthening Christian unity and nurturing leadership that is accountable and responsive to the needs of the people it serves.

The message also highlighted the importance of empowering women and young people, caring for vulnerable communities and responding faithfully to the realities facing Zimbabwe. These priorities speak to the Church's calling not only to proclaim the Gospel, but also to be present in communities and respond to the challenges affecting people's lives.

The Assembly provided an opportunity to celebrate the bonds that connect churches within the ecumenical family. Drawing on the words of Scripture that "although we are many members, we belong to one body" (1 Corinthians 12), the ZCC reaffirmed its commitment to journeying with the RCZ in advancing Christian unity, strengthening the Church's public witness and serving the people of Zimbabwe.

The 34th Synod Assembly therefore marks more than a leadership transition. It is also a moment for the RCZ to reflect on its mission, renew its commitments and consider how it can continue contributing to the Church and wider society. The ZCC celebrates this important gathering with the RCZ and extends its prayers and best wishes to the newly elected Moderamen and the entire RCZ for a fruitful and blessed 34th Synod Assembly.



ZCC HOP for Humanitarian Services and Diakonia delivering ZCC Solidarity remarks to the RCZ Synod on behalf of Rev Wilfred Dimingu

MEMORY HOVE – FROM WATER WOES TO A GARDEN OF HOPE

Memory Hove is 35 years old. For thirteen years, since she married into Muganda village in Mwenezi district, her life has been shaped by two struggles familiar across rural Zimbabwe which include the daily search for water, and a household economy stretched thin by a country that has pushed so many of its breadwinners across the border in search of work.

For five years, Memory walked a 60-kilometre round trip to Mapani village for a single 20-litre bucket of drinking water. She left as early as 3 a.m., travelling with other women and sometimes hiding from elephants



Memory fetching water from the tap at the garden.

and buffalos on the path. She returned around 9 a.m., and only then could her housework begin. It was so hard that she seriously considered leaving her marriage.

Her husband was in South Africa looking for work. Memory shared that he is undocumented there, relying on part-time work and struggling to make ends meet. His situation reflects a wider pattern where 84 percent of Zimbabweans who emigrated did so for employment, and South Africa hosts the largest number of them (ZimStat, Preliminary Report on Migration, 2022). With unreliable income at home, Memory relied on piece jobs such as brick moulding, weeding and laundry, which bring in around US$10 a month.

In 2018, Felm and ZCC drilled a borehole in the village, cutting her water journey from six hours to 30 minutes. The family started a small garden, which led her to the Kushinga Resilience Hub under the Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptation (ECRA-Zim) project. She is now a committee member and manages 8 beds of her own. She plans to sell part of her harvest to pay school fees and to support elderly and disabled community members who cannot grow food for themselves.

"I know suffering, and I know how it feels," she says. "If there is no water, there is no food." Memory hopes to join an ISAL group, save for a catering course, and open a shop and later a restaurant at Rutenga growth point, so that she can also support orphaned children. Her message to other women is, "Work hard and not have a dependency syndrome on our husbands, but work for our family and empower ourselves."

For Memory, the Hub is a foothold in a life she is building on her own terms, where water is no longer a six-hour burden and her dreams no longer feel out of reach.

MEET JENIFER MHURUGWE- BUILDING SOMETHING TO LEAVE BEHIND

The sun is still climbing when Jenifer Mhurugwe walks between her rows of green leaf vegetables, tipping her watering container gently over leaves still cool from the night. A few metres away, her three cows drink from the trough at the Hub centre. It is a small scene, but for Jenifer, 44, it is something she spent most of her adult life without, the steady ability to grow her own food and give



Jenifer watering one of her garden beds.

her animals clean water, on her own land, in her own time.

When Jenifer moved to Mujuru village in 2004, fetching water meant a 25-kilometre trek with a child on her back and a 25-litre bucket in her hands. She left at 6 a.m. and returned at midday, with no scotch cart to ease the load. At times she seriously considered walking away from her marital home. Relief came in 2008, when the community dug wells and a partner drilled a borehole, cutting the distance by half.

In 2019, her marriage ended and she became a single mother of four, now aged 12 to 25. Her eldest son does piece work in Furenga, her second-born daughter is married, and her youngest is in Grade 6. Jenifer had no garden of her own then. She survived on piece jobs, sometimes paid in vegetables and tomatoes from someone else's harvest, and hunger was a recurring part of life. Joining the Kushinga Resilience Hub, under the Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptation (ECRA-Zim) project, changed that cycle. For the first time she is growing her own vegetables. She plans to join an ISAL group and sees the garden as her clearest path to paying her children's school fees. Her children help her water the beds, their first lessons in farming, and she speaks of the garden as a legacy her grandchildren can work one day. One goal remains out of reach for now. She had hoped to build a proper toilet using money from her 2025/2026 sorghum planted on four hectares, but excess water damaged the crop in the field. Her family still uses a temporary pit structure, and she hopes the garden will get her there instead. Water is now one of the easier parts of her day. She fetches from Muganda village, 25 minutes away, and her cows drink clean water at the Hub, with a visible change in their condition.

The land under her vegetable beds was bush not long ago. Jenifer and the other members cleared it by hand, and she believes that from ground like this, good things are only just beginning.

SIPHOSAMI DUBE – A NEW CHAPTER, ONE MINUTE FROM HOME

Siphosami Dube tips a watering can over one of her beds at the Kushinga Resilience Hub, her one-year-old son tied on her back and her four-year-old daughter close behind. The work is not what makes the scene remarkable. What stands out is how ordinary her morning has become. She stepped out of her home a minute ago to fetch water from the taps outside the Hub, and at 23 she still can't quite take that one-minute walk



Siphosam watering one of her beds at the garden.

walk for granted.

When she married and moved to Muganda village on 1 September 2021, water meant something very different. She left home just after 5 a.m., walked two hours to a water source and two hours back, and often made that trip twice in a day, four to five times a week, just to meet the household's domestic needs. Hardship shaped her life long before Muganda. Raised by a single mother, she never knew her father. She dreamed of becoming a nurse, but her schooling ended in Form 2 when her mother could no longer afford the fees. Today her husband relies on piece jobs and is the sole provider. Her only income of her own comes from a small plot of round nuts, which she uses to buy household utensils.

The Kushinga Resilience Hub, under the Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptation (ECRA-Zim) project, has given her something new which is an income that is hers to grow and plan around. She hopes to provide for her children, buy groceries and ease the pressure of an unpredictable household income. One day she would like a small stall to sell her vegetables. Most of all, she hopes that once she is earning, she and her husband can sit down and plan their future together.

As one of the youth members of the Hub, she works well with the other members. Her main challenge is doing her tasks in the garden with her baby on her back. For a young woman who left school at Form 2 and once walked four hours a day for water, the taps outside the Hub and the vegetables she now tends mark the start of a different kind of independence thus, water close to home, and a plan of her own to bring to her marriage.

NEW WINGS FOR HOUSEHOLD INCOMES: BROILER START-UP PACKS DISTRIBUTION IN GUTU AND BIKITA DISTRICTS

Eight community groups in Gutu and Bikita districts, ward 15, 16 and ward 18 and 31 respectively, received a new reason for optimism, broiler production start-up packs, delivered under the Scaling Up Resilience Project's diversified livelihoods component. Each group, a mix of women, men and young people working side by side, received 130 day-old chicks along with a full supply of starter, grower and finisher feed, disinfectant and a stress pack, enough to carry the birds through to the point of sale.

Because each group brings together women, men and young people, the benefit of a single broiler enterprise spreads across the household rather than landing with just one member. For the women in these groups, many of whom carry the daily load of feeding their households, the enterprise offers an income source that sits close to home, fits around domestic responsibilities, and pays out fast. A broiler batch reaches market in weeks rather than a full season, meaning money for school fees, groceries or household needs arrives sooner and more predictably. For the men, it adds a second income stream that complements rather than competes with field crops. In a region where one bad season of drought or flooding can wipe out a year's harvest, having income spread across more than one source, and more than one person in the household, is itself a form of protection against the next shock.

For the young people in each group, broiler production lowers the usual barriers to starting a business. It needs far less land than farming, produces a return in weeks rather than months, and gives first-time entrepreneurs real, practical experience, managing a budget, keeping records, working as part of a group, engaging a market, skills they carry forward long after this first flock.

That mix is deliberate. By bringing generations together around one enterprise, the groups are building not just income, but shared decision-making and shared ownership of the outcome, habits that strengthen the household's resilience well beyond this single batch of chickens. Participants expressed real appreciation for the support and have committed to growing these enterprises further. Looking ahead, groups can expect continued monitoring visits, technical support on vaccination and disease prevention, links to local markets for selling live birds, and training on business management and ISAL integration to help groups reinvest their earnings wisely.





Income Generating Enterprises group members receiving their startup packs.

ZAMI 2026 CALLS FOR ACCESSIBLE JUSTICE AND FAIRER BENEFITS FOR MINING COMMUNITIES

The 15th Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) concluded with calls for stronger protection of mining-affected communities, accessible mechanisms for seeking justice and greater accountability in the management of Zimbabwe's mineral wealth. The declaration, adopted by delegates at the Bulawayo gathering in September 2026, called for independent community grievance mechanisms, transparent resource-backed borrowing and fairer sharing of mining revenues to ensure that mineral wealth contributes meaningfully to local development. Jointly convened by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation (ZELO) and Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), from the 15th to the 29th of September 2026, the Indaba brought together the Church, civil society, government, mining communities and other stakeholders to reflect on responsible mining and inclusive development.

Jointly convened by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation

(ZELO) and the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), the Indaba brought together over 200 delegates from government, Parliament, civil society, mining communities, churches and development partners under the theme "Powering Tomorrow: Reimagining Mining, Energy, Agriculture and Community Development in Zimbabwe."

The ZCC's contribution throughout the week was grounded in a central message: Zimbabwe's mineral wealth must improve people's lives without destroying the environments and livelihoods on which communities depend.

This message was strongly reflected in the theological reflections delivered by ZCC President Bishop Kenneth Sibanda during the official opening. Drawing from Genesis 2:15, Bishop Sibanda reminded delegates that the minerals beneath Zimbabwe's soil are not merely commodities, but a sacred trust from God. He challenged stakeholders to rethink how mining success is measured, emphasising that economic gains cannot come at the expense of communities losing their water, health and livelihoods.

The discussions began on 14 September with a Youth Symposium jointly hosted by ZCC and its partners, bringing together 60 young people from mining communities, tertiary institutions and the ZCC National Youth Executive. In her theological reflection, Rev. Lorah Nyebera challenged young people to move beyond simply being included in conversations and become active participants in the governance of natural resources. The symposium explored opportunities for youth entrepreneurship, skills development and access to financing, while calling for legislative reforms that strengthen young people's participation in the mining sector.





Left: *Rev Lorah Nyebera speaking during the Youth Symposium* ***Right:*** *Youth delegates at the Symposium pose for a group photo*

As the Indaba progressed, attention turned to the relationship between mineral wealth, public debt and economic justice. On 16 September, ZCC partnered with ZIMCODD, the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) to convene a discussion on resource-backed financing, debt sustainability and mineral governance.

Contributing to the discussion, ZCC Economic Justice Champion Rev. Martha Mtswakatira drew on Proverbs 22:7, which reminds us that "the borrower is servant to the lender." She cautioned that while resource-backed loans may offer immediate financing solutions, borrowing without transparency and public accountability risks placing long-term obligations on future generations. Her reflections brought an important question into the discussion: should future generations inherit the benefits of today's mineral wealth or the debts incurred against it?

The ZCC also partnered with the Economic Justice Network (EJN) to host a side session on expanding pathways to remedy for mining-affected communities. The discussion explored the difficulties communities face when seeking justice for environmental damage, displacement and other mining-related grievances. ZCC Mashonaland West Provincial Local Ecumenical Fellowship Chairperson Rev. Dr George Manyika highlighted how churches, as trusted community institutions, can help document grievances, facilitate dialogue and connect affected communities with institutions responsible for providing remedy.

These conversations informed the broader priorities reflected in the ZAMI 2026 Declaration, which called for independent, accessible and legally recognised community grievance redress mechanisms across mining operations. Such mechanisms would help ensure that communities affected by mining have clear pathways to

report violations, seek compensation and hold responsible actors accountable.
The declaration also called for greater transparency in resource-backed borrowing, safeguards against unsustainable debt and stronger revenue-sharing arrangements to ensure that mining host communities benefit from the resources extracted from their land. Importantly, it recognised the Church's responsibility to provide moral leadership by challenging irresponsible mining practices and advocating for environmental stewardship, community rights and corporate accountability.



Left: *ZCC President Bishop Kenneth Sibanda delivering theological Reflections during the ZAMI official opening* ***Right:*** *ZAMI delegates following proceedings at the Indaba*

For the ZCC, the 15th ZAMI reaffirmed that responsible mining is not only an economic or environmental question, but also a matter of justice, human dignity and stewardship. As the Council continues to work with communities, government and civil society partners, its commitment remains to ensure that the voices of mining-affected communities are heard and that the country's mineral wealth contributes to sustainable livelihoods and shared prosperity.

Guided by Christ's promise of abundant life in John 10:10, the ZCC continues to advocate for a Zimbabwe where the true measure of mineral wealth is not only what is extracted from the ground, but what is restored, protected and invested in the lives of its people.

ZCC STRENGTHENS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN NINE DISTRICTS

For communities struggling with unreliable water supplies, poor roads, environmental damage and limited access to information about public resources, good governance is more than a policy discussion. It is about having a voice in decisions that affect their daily lives and knowing how to hold responsible institutions accountable.

Between August and September 2026, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), through its Church and Community Reconciliation Mission, equipped 272 community members, comprising 160 women and 112 men, with practical skills in good governance, policy analysis and social accountability across nine districts in Zimbabwe.

The two-day capacity-building trainings were conducted in Buhera, Bulawayo, Chitungwiza, Chipinge, Gwanda, Harare, Hurungwe, Shurugwi and Chinhoyi. They brought together faith-based organisations, community representatives, residents' associations and other local stakeholders to strengthen citizens' understanding of governance structures and their role in promoting transparency, accountability and responsive public service delivery.

The trainings created space for participants to reflect on the challenges affecting their communities. Across the districts, residents raised concerns about water shortages, deteriorating roads, poor waste management, limited participation in council budgeting processes and inadequate information on how public resources are managed.

In mining communities such as Shurugwi and Gwanda, participants also raised concerns about

environmental degradation, the impact of mining activities on livelihoods and limited transparency regarding the benefits communities receive from mineral extraction. Other discussions highlighted challenges affecting women and young people, including gender-based violence, substance abuse and limited opportunities for meaningful participation in local decision-making. These experiences formed the foundation of the training, allowing participants to connect governance principles with the realities they encounter in their communities.

Participants were introduced to Zimbabwe's governance structures, including the responsibilities of local authorities, councillors, Ward Development Committees and Village Development Committees. They also explored practical social accountability tools, including public expenditure tracking and social audits, which citizens can use to monitor public resources and assess whether services and development projects are delivered as promised.

An important outcome of the trainings was the development of community action plans, through which participants identified local governance challenges and outlined practical steps for engaging responsible authorities. This moved the discussions beyond identifying problems towards strengthening communities' ability to organise, participate and seek solutions.The programme also recorded encouraging improvements in participants' governance knowledge and confidence. Pre- and post-training assessments showed a 36 percent increase in self-rated governance knowledge and a 13 percent improvement in confidence to engage on governance issues. These findings suggest that the trainings helped participants strengthen their understanding of the institutions, processes and accountability tools available to them.

As an ecumenical body with local structures across Zimbabwe, the Council recognises that meaningful citizen participation begins when people understand their rights, know where decisions are made and have the confidence to engage institutions responsible for public services.

Through its continued work on governance, citizen engagement and social accountability, the ZCC remains committed to empowering communities to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives and to contribute towards a more just, accountable and socially cohesive Zimbabwe.





Left: *Chinhoyi Residents Trust Representative facilitating during the Training in Makonde District* ***Right:*** *One of the group sessions during the training in Shurugwi.*

ZCC WOMEN ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIPS MARK INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Every year on 21 September, the world observes the International Day of Peace (IDP), a day established by the United Nations to strengthen the ideals of peace and encourage people and communities to reflect on their role in building peaceful societies. The 2026 commemoration was held under the theme "Invest in Peace - For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day," highlighting that peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but something that must be deliberately nurtured through dialogue, inclusion, solidarity, respect and action. The theme is a call to recognise that everyone has a role to play in building peace, and that meaningful investment in peace must happen every day and in every community.

It was against this backdrop that the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) Bindura Women Ecumenical Fellowship (WEF) commemorated the IDP on the 25th of September 2026 in Bindura, Mashonaland Central, bringing women together to reflect on peace and security in their homes and communities. At the heart of the commemoration was a Women, Peace and Security (WPS) session led by the Ministry of





Left: *ZCC Bindura Women Ecumenical Fellowships during the IDP Commemorations.* ***Right:*** *ZRP Victim Friendly Unit doing a presentation during the Commemoration*

Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development. The session provided a space for women to reflect on the peace and security challenges they encounter within their families and communities, while considering the practical role they can play in preventing conflict, responding to violence and strengthening peaceful relationships. The discussions affirmed an important reality: women have always been peacebuilders. In homes, churches and communities, women often play critical roles in resolving disagreements, encouraging dialogue, supporting people affected by violence and creating spaces where others can be heard. Yet these everyday contributions to peacebuilding are not always recognised as part of the wider peace and security agenda. The WPS discussion therefore provided an opportunity to look at women not only through the lens of vulnerability, but also through the lens of agency and leadership. When women are equipped with knowledge, included in decision-making and given space to participate, they can contribute meaningfully to preventing violence, strengthening families and communities, and building more inclusive and peaceful societies. Adding a practical dimension to the engagement, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Victim Friendly Unit shared information on available support and reporting mechanisms for survivors of violence. The session helped participants understand where survivors can seek assistance and the importance of creating communities in which people experiencing violence can access support and speak out safely.




Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe representative presenting during the IDP Commemoration in Gweru by the Midlands WEF

The message of peace was also being carried through the ZCC's structures in other parts of the country. In Gweru, the Midlands Women Ecumenical Fellowship similarly commemorated the International Day of Peace on the 1st of October, with the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) making a presentation on issues related to WPS. The parallel engagements in Bindura and Gweru demonstrated how global observances can be translated into meaningful conversations at community level, allowing women to examine the realities affecting their own communities and consider the contribution they can make.

For the ZCC, these efforts speak to a broader understanding of peacebuilding. ZCC recognises that sustainable peace is closely connected to justice, inclusion and human dignity. As the Council continues its work towards a just, peaceful and socially cohesive Zimbabwe, the voices and experiences of women remain an important part of that vision. As Scripture reminds us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." - Matthew 5:9, the call therefore, is not simply to celebrate peace, but to build it, sustain it and invest in it - for everyone, everywhere, every day.



Business and Cooperative Development Officer training participants

FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING EQUIPS 200 REFUGEES IN TONGOGARA FOR A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

From 28 to 30 September 2026, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), under the Enhancing Resilience and Peaceful Coexistence project (AFP), delivered a three-day Financial Literacy Training to 200 beneficiaries across the Tongogara Refugee Settlement, a critical step on the path toward savings groups, small business management, and vocational training linkage. To make the training manageable and effective, participants were split into three groups across the settlement, with all facilitators drawn from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development. Sessions were delivered in English, Swahili, Shona and Ndau, with interpretation where needed, ensuring the content reached participants in the language they understood best.

Participants worked through presentations and group discussions, then put the concepts into practice. This included building sample household budgets, developing basic business plans, and even physically filling in ISAL savings books to understand how an Internal Savings and Lending group functions in real terms. Topics ranged from the fundamentals of income and household budgeting, to saving, avoiding bad debt, basic costing and pricing, and setting financial goals. The sessions on household budgeting and small market business management drew especially strong engagement from female participants, who shared their own savings practices, money management challenges and business experiences throughout the training.

By the end of the three days, participants could draft simple household budgets and basic business plans, practical tools many were applying to their own circumstances for the first time. Understanding of how and why to save, and how ISALs work, improved noticeably, and participants left expressing real commitment to start saving and to form ISAL groups of their own. Feedback was strongly positive, with many requesting continued mentorship to keep building on what they'd learned. The training sets the stage for three follow-on steps which is linking participants to vocational training in tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, catering and other trades; supporting the formation of ISAL groups, including drafting constitutions and electing leadership; and providing ongoing mentorship and monitoring as beneficiaries put their new savings and business skills into practice.

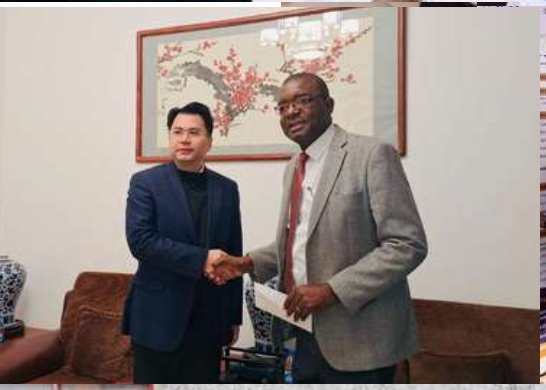
3RD QUARTER IN PICTURES



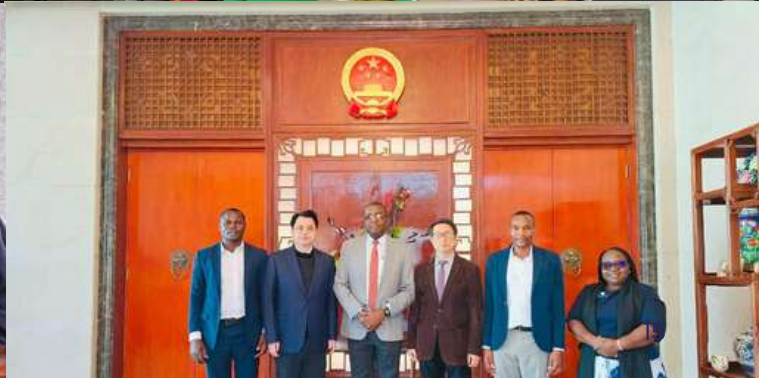










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