



Ministry of Energy, Zambia



Ministry of Energy & Power Development, Zimbabwe



ZIMBABWE-ZAMBIA ENERGY PROJECTS SUMMIT
26-28 NOVEMBER 2025
LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA



**MINES AND ENERGY:
HOW STAKEHOLDERS HAVE FAST-TRACKED PRIVATE SECTOR
PROJECTS TO BECOME AFRICA'S TOP INVESTMENT DESTINATION**

POST SUMMIT REPORT

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“ The 2025 edition of the Zim Zam Energy Projects Summit proved to be an exceptional platform for high-level networking and strategic dialogue. The calibre of attendees, including decision-makers and industry leaders from both Zimbabwe and Zambia, ensured that conversations were purposeful and forward-looking.

The summit effectively showcased the tangible progress and shared commitment of our two nations toward sustainable energy development. The successes in Zambia are a model for the whole continent on how to solve tough problems. We were inspired.

The beautiful venue and world-class hospitality from our Zambian hosts created the perfect environment for collaboration and new partnerships to flourish. ”

Victor Utedzi, CEO, ATC Development

THANK YOU FROM ENERGYNET

Dear Colleagues,

We were thrilled to return to the stunning Victoria Falls, this time to the Zambia side, to host the 2nd edition of the **Zimbabwe-Zambia (Zim-Zam) Energy Projects Summit** from 26-28th November 2025. This year we welcomed attendees to the Mukuni Conference Centre, Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya, in Livingstone, with spectacular views of the Zambezi River. The annual Investors' Retreat met under a new theme, **Mines and Energy: How Stakeholders have Fast-Track Private Sector Projects to Become Africa's Top Investment Destination**.

We were honoured to have Her Worship Constance Nalishebo Muleabai, Mayor of Livingstone, welcome us to Livingstone, and have H.E. Honourable Credo Nanjuwa, Provincial Minister of Southern Province, and Kuso Kamwambi, Head, Presidential Delivery Unit Zambia (PDU), officially open the summit. We heard from H.E. Honourable Yeukai Simbanegavi, Deputy Minister of Energy & Power Development, Zimbabwe and H.E. Honourable Lerato Mataboge, Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy & Digitisation, African Union Commission, as well as various high-level representatives from both the Zambian and Zimbabwean public sector.

The summit saw two signings take place -an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) was signed between developers GEI Power and YEO and the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) for the Cooma Solar Power Plant while ZESCO announced a landmark partnership with Kiyona.

We were also pleased to have our Strategic Partners, the African Union Commission, delivering a High-Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on the Grand Inga Strategic Coordination Committee; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) giving presentations on a Framework on a Just Energy Transition.

This year attendees enjoyed their stunning surroundings through a Welcome Drinks Reception hosted by ZESCO on the banks of the Zambezi at sunset; a Drinks Reception and Buffet on a River Cruiser; and a traditional Boma dinner and dance show. We were also able to undertake a fascinating tour of the Mukuni Substation, thanks to ZESCO.

I would like to thank our Summit Sponsor, Petrodex, for their fantastic support, as well as Country Host, Copperbelt Energy, and Sponsors, Standard Bank and ZESCO. Thanks also to all our partners who supported the summit, as well as our speakers and delegates for their valuable input and for their pledges to the regional energy sector.

We look forward to hearing next year about how these significant pledges and connections turned into action and moving projects forward.



Gemma Gosling
Producer
EnergyNet

WITH THANKS TO OUR SPEAKERS

HONOURABLE MINISTERS, COMMISSIONERS, MAYORS & PERMANENT SECRETARIES

H.E. Honourable Lerato Mataboge, Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy & Digitisation, African Union Commission
H.E. Honourable Yeukai Simbanegavi, Deputy Minister of Energy & Power Development, Zimbabwe
H.E. Honourable Credo Nanjuwa, Provincial Minister of Southern Province, Zambia
Her Worship Constance Nalishebo Muleabai, Mayor of Livingstone, Zambia
Eunice Nawa, District Commissioner of Livingstone, Zambia
Gloria Magombo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy & Power Development, Zimbabwe

PRESIDENTIAL DELIVERY UNIT (PDU)

Kuso Kamwambi, Head, Presidential Delivery Unit Zambia (PDU), Zambia

UTILITIES

Nobert Matarutse, Acting MD, Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), Zimbabwe
Howard Choga, Acting MD, Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission & Distribution Company (ZETDC), Zimbabwe
Fitzpatrick Kapepe, Director, Strategy & Business Development, ZESCO, Zambia
Wesley Lwiindi, Director, Hydropower Projects, ZESCO, Zambia
Francis Namakanda, Director Planning & Projects, ZESCO, Zambia
Gift Ndhlovu, General Manager, International Business & Special Assignments, ZESA Holdings, Zimbabwe
John Diya, Senior Manager, Electricity Trading & Operations, Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission & Distribution Company (ZETDC), Zimbabwe

PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

Mafoyo Ziba, Director, Energy, Ministry of Energy, Zambia
Moses Ntlamelle, Senior Programme Officer, Energy, Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Edvan Moyo, Programme Officer, Energy, Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Felister Makumbinde, Acting CEO, Rural Electrification Agency, Zimbabwe
Suzyo Silavwe, Acting Director, Engineering Services, Rural Electrification Authority (REA), Zambia
Cliff Nhandara, Director Planning & Technology, Rural Electrification Fund, Zimbabwe
Wilson Masango, Chief Engineer Markets, Southern African Power Pool (SAPP)
Munyaradzi Munodawafa, Chief Executive, Zambezi River Authority (ZRA)
Román Iranzo, Programme Officer, European Union Delegation to Zambia & COMESA
Tinashe Yafele, Head of Cluster, Energy & Trading, Mutapa Investment Fund, Zimbabwe
Yohannes Hailu, Economic Affairs Officer, Energy, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
Monga Mehlwana, Senior Economic Officer, Connectivity & Infrastructure, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

REGULATORS

Geoffrey Mabea, CEO, Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern & Southern Africa (RAERESA)
Askwar Hilonga, Executive Secretary, Energy Regulators Association of Eastern Africa (EREA)
Man'arai Ndovorwi, Technical Services Director, Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA), Zimbabwe
James Manda, Technical Manager, African Forum for Utility Regulators (AFUR)

WITH THANKS TO OUR SPEAKERS

ASSOCIATIONS

Chimuka Nketani, Director, Investments, Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), Zambia
Joseph Mutale, IRP Project Lead, CIGZambia & Chairman, Zambia Renewable Energy Association (ZARENA), Zambia
Richard Silumbe, Board Chairman, Zambia Research & Development Centre (ZRDC), Zambia

PRIVATE SECTOR AND STAKEHOLDERS

Honourable Ibrahim Matola, Former Minister of Energy, Malawi
Patrick Kouame, Investment Director, African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM)
James Cumming, CEO, Anthem
Victor Utedzi, CEO, ATC Development
Francisca Morgado, Investment Manager, Project Finance, British International Investment (BII)
Cavin Magwenzi, Group Engineering Manager, Caledonia Mining
Bwalya Mulenga, Head Business Development & Power Trading, Copperbelt Energy Corporation
Emmanuel Chilombo Kalenga, MD, Enterprise Power Zambia
Luyanga Mufungulwa, Head of Corporate & Investment Banking, First National Bank Zambia (FNB)
Anthony Mukutuma, Director, Zambia, First Quantum Minerals
Fedde Zwart, Senior Investment Officer, FMO
John Smelcer, Chief Development Officer, Globeleq
Collin Gumbu, Policy & Advocacy Lead, GOGLA
Helen Zulu, Acting Regional Director, Southern Africa, Ignite Energy Access
Nsofwa Sikanyika, Head of Commercial, Kanona Power
Katai Kachasa, CEO, Lufubu Power Company
Alpha Mwale, CEO, Lunsemfwa Hydro Power Company
Monie Captan, Deputy CEO, West Africa, Petrodex
Mulubwa Mpundu Chola, Legal Counsel, Petrodex
Rentia van Tonder, Head, Power, Standard Bank
Sherrill Byrne, Head Project Finance, Energy & Infrastructure Finance, Standard Bank
Abdul Yakubu, Senior Energy Specialist, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)
Memory Mashingaidze, Director & Head of Renewables, Tatanga Energy
Kalaluka Itwi, Chief Financial Officer, Zambia National Commercial Bank (Zanaco)
Shepherd Fungura, Group CEO, ZB Financial Holdings
Daniel Rea, CEO, Zengamina Power
Amend Chiduma, Chief Technical Officer, Zimplats

MODERATORS

Sosten Ziuku, Director for Energy Conservation & Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy & Power Development, Zimbabwe
Rose Sibisi, Manager, Corporate Affairs, ZESCO, Zambia
Leria Arinaitwe, Senior Legal Counsel & Energy Sector Lead, African Legal Support Facility (ALSF)
Lisa Pinsley, Fund Head, African Transition Acceleration Fund, African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM)
Sara Elhag, Head of Energy Division, African Union Commission (AU)
Jonathan Berman, MD, Autonomi Capital
Alexandra Felekis, Partner, Bowmans
James Mackay, CEO, Energy Council of South Africa
Collen Zalengera, Country Delivery Lead, Malawi, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet
Towera Temba-Nkanza, Co-founder & Principal, Hepta Advisory
Amanda Chipako, Senior Investment Officer, Proparco

ATTENDEE BREAKDOWN



C-Level



Manager



HoD / Partner



Director

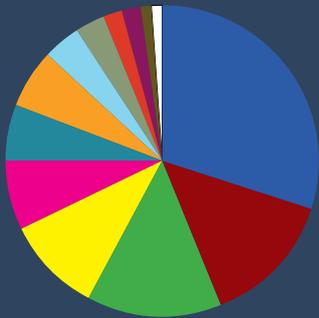


Early Career Professional

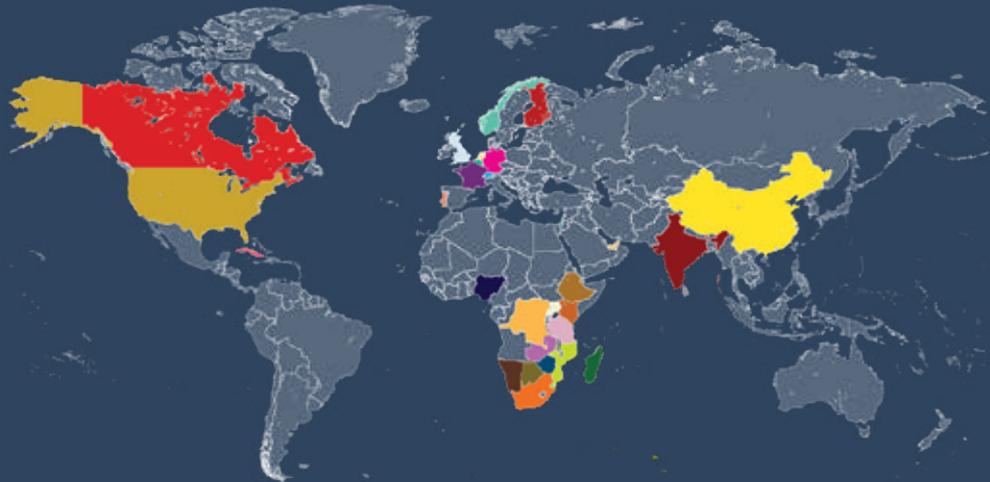


Associate

Attendee breakdown by industry



- Developers 30%
- Financial Institutions 14%
- Press 14%
- State Owned Enterprises (Utilities etc) 10%
- Associations / NGO / Research 7%
- Professional Services..... 6%
- Technology Providers 6%
- Ministers 4%
- Engineering, Procurement, Construction (EPC)..... 3%
- Large Scale Energy Users 2%
- Regulators..... 2%
- SME / Entrepreneurs..... 1%
- Oil and Gas..... 1%



Countries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Botswana
- Canada
- Cayman Islands
- China
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- India
- Israel
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Portugal
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Switzerland
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Tuesday 25th November 2025

Welcome Drinks Reception. Hosted by:



Day One: Wednesday 26th November 2025

Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit 2025: Official Opening

Mines and Energy: How Stakeholders have Fast-Tracked Private Sector Projects to Become Africa's Top Investment Destination

Addressing Opportunities Head On – How Structural Policy Changes Have Opened the Floodgates of Investment for the Region

Recent collaborative projects coming online show the impact of government investment in the energy sector since the energy crisis began.

M300 – Benchmarking Success in Zambia and Zimbabwe - Where Are We Now and Where Should We Be a Year from Now?

With both countries committing to M300 Compacts, they are pledging to work at scale to increase energy access, including access to clean cooking solutions, and partner with the private sector to mobilise new solutions.

Framework on a Just Energy Transition

Closed Door Southern African Development Community (SADC) Meeting – Invitation Only



Meeting the Demands of Intensive Energy Users

How the mining sector is structuring robust renewable energy systems to support the aggressive growth coming from the global critical mineral drive.

High-Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on the Grand Inga Strategic Coordination Committee (GISCC)

Closed Door African Union Meeting – Invitation Only



Zambia and Zimbabwe's Renewable Energy Opportunity

Faced with climate change, a demand for a just energy transition, and with abundant natural resources for solar, wind and hydro, both countries are pushing forward with prioritising renewable energy projects to meet energy access targets.

High-Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on the Grand Inga Strategic Coordination Committee (GISCC)

Closed Door African Union Meeting – Invitation Only



Drinks Reception & Buffet. Hosted by:



AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Day Two: Thursday 27th November 2025

Innovative Financing Mechanisms – From MOUs to MWs

Over the past 12 months there has been a dramatic shift in the global financial markets, resulting in project funding and G/PRGs stalling. Here we explore financial innovations resulting from today's global economic environment.

Hosted by Southern African Development Community (SADC) Framework on a Just Energy Transition

Discussion on financing the SADC JET framework and the role of institutions.



The Future of Hydro in the Time of Climate Change

Droughts, and the subsequent reduction in water levels, has created electricity shortages through power deficits, leading to load shedding and reliance on imports.

Zambia: Project Presentations

High-Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on the Grand Inga Strategic Coordination Committee (GISCC)

Closed Door African Union Meeting – Invitation Only



Implementing Regional Transmission and Interconnection Projects

The advanced foundations that SAPP offers means that if the various interconnectors can be brought to fruition, massive benefits will be reaped.

Hosted by Southern African Development Community (SADC) Framework on a Just Energy Transition

Road mapping and implementation strategy



How are Energy Traders Transforming the Energy Market?

Faced with a need for creditworthy off-takers, energy traders have flocked to the region, offering an alternative route to market, filling a gap that utilities have left.

Zimbabwe: Project Presentations

High-Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on the Grand Inga Strategic Coordination Committee (GISCC)

Closed Door African Union Meeting – Invitation Only



Closing Remarks for the Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit 2025

Mukuni Boma Cultural Experience

Traditional African dining, drumming and dancing. A unique cultural experience that bombards the senses with tastes, sights and sounds of Africa.

Day Three: Friday 28th November 2025

Energy Project Excursion: Mukuni Substation

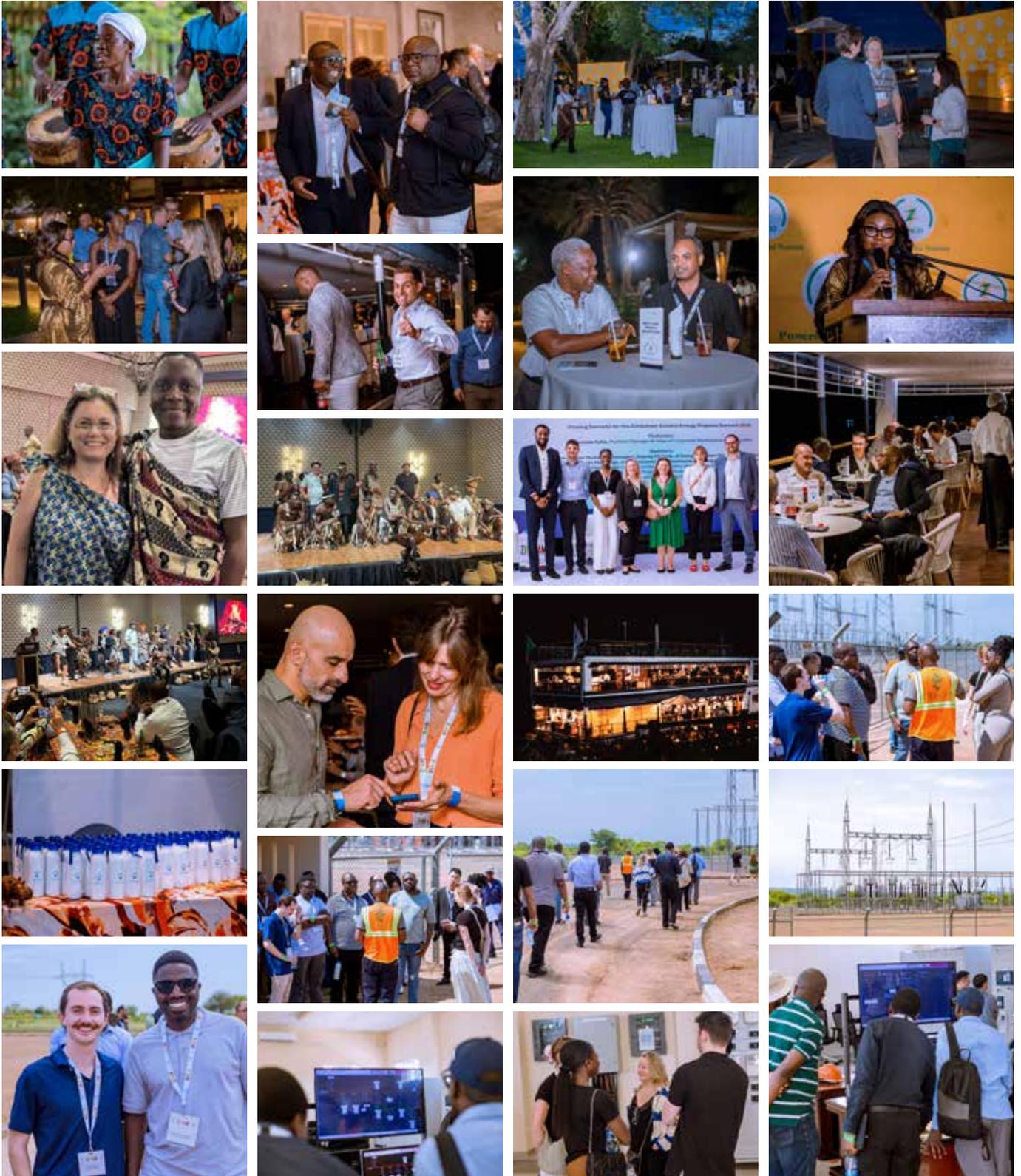
PHOTO GALLERY



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PRESS FIGURES

Post-summit coverage:



962
News/articles



USD 12 234 800
PVR



897
Total number of total news clippings



65 164 103
Total views



30
Interviews



27 journalists from
19 media outlets

Media Coverage



PRESS



ZimZam 2025 kicks off with strong push for regional energy action

By SHARON CHIBWELU

The Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit 2025 has kicked off in Harare, marking the regional energy cooperation and partnership summit. The event, organized by the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA) and the Zambia Energy Regulatory Board (ZERAZ), is the first of its kind in the region. The summit is a platform for the two countries to discuss and coordinate energy projects and policies. It is expected to attract investors and stakeholders from across the region.

The summit is being held at the Harare Convention Centre. The event is being organized by the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA) and the Zambia Energy Regulatory Board (ZERAZ). The summit is a platform for the two countries to discuss and coordinate energy projects and policies. It is expected to attract investors and stakeholders from across the region.

GreenCo, Kiyona Energy sign strategic clean power deal

By SHARON CHIBWELU

GreenCo and Kiyona Energy have signed a strategic partnership agreement to develop and operate clean power projects in Zimbabwe. The agreement is a landmark deal for the two companies, marking a significant step in their commitment to sustainable energy. The partnership will focus on developing solar and wind power projects across the country. The deal is expected to create thousands of jobs and contribute to the country's energy security.

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ZimZam 2025: turning energy pledges into power

By SHARON CHIBWELU

The Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit 2025 is a platform for the two countries to discuss and coordinate energy projects and policies. It is expected to attract investors and stakeholders from across the region. The summit is a landmark event for the region, marking the first time that the two countries have held such a high-level meeting. The summit is expected to lead to the signing of several energy projects and policies.

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National rooftop energy partnership pact sealed

(From front page)

Mr Loongo said by joining public institutions with private investment, the country could deliver clean energy faster and create jobs that every citizen benefits from the abundant renewable resources.

Kiyona Energy representative, Felix Mwanza, said his company was excited to partner with ZESCO's renewable energy division to develop rooftop solar projects. He said the partnership would accelerate the rollout of solar panels across the country, reducing electricity costs for businesses and households.

Mr Loongo said the partnership was a key step in the country's energy transition. He said the government was committed to providing clean, affordable energy to all Zimbabweans. He said the partnership would create thousands of jobs and contribute to the country's economic growth.

GreenCo signs deal for rooftop power model

Partners with Zesco, Kiyona Energy to accelerate access to clean energy

SHARON CHIBWELU

The agreement was signed during the Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit in Harare. The partnership is a landmark deal for the two companies, marking a significant step in their commitment to sustainable energy. The partnership will focus on developing solar and wind power projects across the country. The deal is expected to create thousands of jobs and contribute to the country's energy security.

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Govt targets 10 gigawatts of power

Be professional, IBA orders KBN TV

'Dismiss Mwiriri Zulu's stripping case'

The Zimbabwean government has set a target of generating 10 gigawatts of power by 2030. This target is part of the country's energy transition strategy. The government is committed to providing clean, affordable energy to all Zimbabweans. The target is expected to be achieved through a combination of solar, wind, and hydro power projects.

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Zambia and Zimbabwe Tear Down Regulatory Walls to Ignite Private Energy Markets

Clarence K. Chongo, AfricaWorks at Agora Village, LUSAKA | Saturday, 29 November 2025



Two neighbouring nations just rewrote their entire energy playbook. Zambia and Zimbabwe systematically dismantled the monopoly structures that protected state utilities for decades and handed the keys over to private developers who demanded a guarantee that their money would not vanish into a black hole of bureaucracy.

These transformations were dissected during the panel “Addressing Opportunities Head On—How Structural Policy Changes Have Opened the Floodgates of Investment for the Region” at the Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit (ZimZam 2025) in Livingstone. The session brought together regulators, utilities, and financiers to examine precisely how these nations executed this radical restructuring.



THE END OF THE BUREAUCRATIC MAZE

For years, energy developers in Southern Africa faced a familiar nightmare: a labyrinth of disconnected ministries, conflicting regulations, and endless waiting periods that killed projects before they ever broke ground. In Zambia, the government decided that the only way to solve the energy crisis was to physically remove these barriers. The solution arrived in the form of the Presidential Delivery

Unit (PDU), a specialized body created in 2023 with a singular mandate to destroy bottlenecks.

Ms. Kuso Kamwambi, the Head of the PDU, characterised the unit as a mechanism designed specifically to force existing departments to cooperate, rather than functioning as an additional layer of government.

“Our mandate is to spearhead or fast track presidential priorities,” Ms. Kamwambi explained, noting that energy sits at the very top of that list. “Our first role is policy alignment. We have to ensure that policy and regulatory reform are aligned.”

The PDU functions as a high-level convener, bringing disparate stakeholders into the same room to resolve issues immediately rather than trading letters for months. This mandate transcends administrative routine, carrying the highest political weight available in the country. Ms. Kamwambi revealed that the President personally attends operational meetings regarding energy, sending a clear signal to the civil service that delays are no longer acceptable.



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To translate this high-level pressure into practical results for investors, the PDU introduced a “one-stop shop” for licensing. This single window eliminates the need for developers to run between the Environmental Management Agency, local councils, and energy regulators.

“They now know that the PDU is a place where they can knock,” Ms. Kamwambi noted, adding that developers can escalate issues “potentially all the way straight to State House” if they encounter unreasonable obstruction.

NEIGHBOURING REFORMS AND RISK MITIGATION

Across the southern border, Zimbabwe is executing a nearly identical strategy to attract capital. The focus has shifted entirely from state-controlled generation to creating an environment where private money feels safe. Mr. Howard Choga, the Acting Managing Director of the Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZTDC), emphasized that their reforms mirror the Zambian approach because the fundamental laws of economics do not change when you cross the Zambezi.

“Private capital normally flows where there is a return and where the off-taker risk is effectively mitigated,” Mr. Choga stated, outlining the philosophy behind their new market structure.

The Zimbabwean regulator has taken an aggressive stance on listening to the market. Rather than dictating terms from an ivory tower, the regulator actively solicits feedback from investors and adjusts rules to solve liquidity and operational challenges. This responsiveness has birthed a new class of market participants: the energy traders.

“When we talk about traders, this is a product of market reforms,” Mr. Choga observed. These reforms are designed to provide comfort to investors who might be wary of selling exclusively to a state utility. By allowing Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to sell to ZESA, directly to customers, or to licensed traders, the market has de-risked the act of generating power.

Mr. Choga pointed to the five licensed traders currently active in Zimbabwe as proof that the concept works. These entities support new projects and help alleviate cash flow stress for existing ones. The result is an investment climate that he described as “good and improving,” with capital finally beginning to flow into the sector.

OPEN ACCESS AND THE BUSINESS OF WHEELING

The shift away from state monopolies has opened lucrative opportunities for established infrastructure owners. In Zambia, the Copperbelt Energy Corporation (CEC) historically operated as a privately owned transmission network, a model that was once unique in Africa. Today, they view the liberalization of the market as a chance to expand well beyond their traditional role.

Mr. Mulenga Bwalya, the Head of Business Development and Power Trading at CEC, views open access as an immediate commercial trigger.





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“It obviously presents imminent opportunities to CEC,” Mr. Bwalya remarked. He explained that the reforms allow the company to monetize unused capacity on their network. “We certainly see opportunities to cash in because then we can schedule that capacity and have it availed to the traders or producers.”

This “inward” opportunity is matched by an “outward” one. CEC can now utilize third-party networks, such as Zesco’s grid, to wheel power to customers situated far outside the traditional Copperbelt mining region. This arrangement, often referred to as a “back-to-back” agreement, effectively turns the national grid into a marketplace where electrons can be bought and sold regardless of where they are generated or consumed.

POLICY IMPACTING THE STREET LEVEL

These reforms extend well beyond high-level transmission deals and international finance, filtering directly down to community infrastructure. The PDU in Zambia recognized that building schools and clinics without electricity was a futile exercise in ticking boxes.

Ms. Kamwambi highlighted a critical policy shift regarding the Constituency Development Funds (CDF). “In the past, we were allowed to just build our classrooms and clinics and whatever infrastructure projects with or without power,” she said. “But now we are saying as a requirement as you construct you must also think about solar.”

This integration of energy policy into general infrastructure development ensures that a new clinic actually has the power to run a refrigerator for vaccines, rather than just standing as a hollow shell. It is part of what Ms. Kamwambi called a “solar explosion,” which includes green city initiatives, rooftop solar expansion, and net metering reforms that allow ordinary citizens and businesses to feed power back into the grid.

The long-term goal for both nations is to perfect this open access policy. By removing the government as the sole gatekeeper of energy, Zambia and Zimbabwe are betting that the private sector, once freed from regulatory shackles, will build the generation capacity that the state never could. As Ms. Kamwambi put it, the priority is to “continue to support the open access policy and continue to perfect it,” ensuring the door remains open for anyone willing to invest in the light.

“ Considering the energy challenges that Zambia and Zimbabwe encountered in the recent years, it was opportunity for me to appreciate the magnitude of problems and determine how my organization can support the two countries. This event provided a platform to understand the depth of problems and establish possible solutions through formal and informal interactions. ”

Moses Ntlamelle, Senior Programme Officer, Energy, Southern African Development Community (SADC)



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Zambia Dismantles Every Energy Rule Africa Ever Knew to Deliver 10,000 Megawatts by 2030

Esther Nachula, Agora Village, AfricaWorks, LUSAKA | 28th November 2025

Zambia created a Renewable Energy Ladder Mechanism that finances early-stage development costs including feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and grid connection analyses, addressing the capital barrier that prevented smaller developers from advancing projects to bankability. Speaking at the 2025 Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit in Livingstone, Ms. Francisca Morgado identified this financing innovation as critical because traditional project finance structures require developers to fund substantial upfront costs before securing debt or equity commitments, a requirement that excluded all but the largest international firms and reduced market competition. The mechanism reflects recognition that achieving the 10-gigawatt target requires enabling multiple pathways to market rather than depending exclusively on utility-scale procurement that concentrates development activity among a small number of established players.

MARKET ACCESS TRANSFORMS INVESTMENT DYNAMICS

Renewable Energy Ladder Mechanism (RELM) operations complement broader regulatory reforms that fundamentally altered how electricity markets function in Zambia. Open Access regulations now permit independent power producers to transmit electricity across national infrastructure without ZESCO’s commercial approval, ending a monopoly structure that gave the state utility control over generation, transmission, and distribution. Professor Chito Mutale describes this transformation as essential for attracting private capital at the scale required to meet the 10-gigawatt target, because government balance sheets cannot support the necessary investment while private investors historically avoided markets where dominant utilities controlled both infrastructure access and competitive entry.





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“The regulatory framework had to change,” Professor Mutale explained, “because private capital will not deploy in markets where the incumbent utility controls who can compete and on what terms.”

Institutional architecture separates transmission system operation from commercial generation interests through an Independent System and Market Operator (ISMO). Separation addresses investor concerns about discriminatory access that discouraged capital deployment in markets where the incumbent utility managed grid operations while competing against independent generators. Mr. John Smeltzer explains that ISMO development creates neutral administration of transmission infrastructure, treating all market participants equally regardless of ownership structure or commercial relationships with ZESCO.

Industrial consumers now negotiate power purchase agreements directly with independent developers, evaluating competing proposals based on tariffs, delivery timelines, and service reliability. Such transactions were legally impossible before Open Access regulations took effect, when ZESCO determined pricing and supply conditions without market competition. Captive customers becoming active buyers changes investment incentives across the entire value chain, as private capital flows toward opportunities that previously existed only within ZESCO’s exclusive domain.

PLANNING DISCIPLINE UNDERPINS CAPACITY TARGETS

Zambia’s 10-gigawatt ambition rests on Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) frameworks that incorporate demand forecasting methodologies absent from previous infrastructure strategies. Mr. Román Irazo identifies planning discipline as critical for investor confidence, because developers require evidence that projected consumption justifies proposed capacity additions, particularly when projects depend on long-term power purchase agreements with creditworthy offtakers. IRP processes address historical patterns where optimistic projections collided with actual demand growth, leaving generation assets underutilised and debt service obligations unmet.

Demand forecasting now examines sectoral consumption patterns, economic growth trajectories, and industrial expansion plans rather than relying on linear extrapolations from historical data. Mining operations represent substantial baseload demand that can anchor large-scale generation projects, while commercial and residential growth creates additional market depth. Professor Mutale emphasises that transparent planning processes allow developers to assess market opportunities independently rather than depending entirely on government assertions about future electricity requirements.



This is a conference that quietly allows you to do business effectively with the right people in the right environment. Some conferences try to boost their own profile by wasting people’s valuable time with VIP set-pieces or generating superficial announcements - this isn’t one of them. The personal presence and contacts of the organising team also help make it effective. ”

Philippa Viljoen, Business Development Manager, The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG)



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IRP frameworks also coordinate generation additions with transmission infrastructure development, ensuring that new capacity can actually deliver power to consumption centres. Grid connection studies identify bottlenecks and required upgrades before developers commit capital to generation projects that cannot access markets due to transmission constraints. Coordination reduces stranded asset risk that previously deterred investment in projects that secured generation licenses but faced years-long delays connecting to the grid.

FINANCING INNOVATION ENABLES MARKET ENTRY

RELM financing addresses the capital gap that traditionally limited market participation to established international developers capable of self-funding early-stage costs. Feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, and grid connection analyses require substantial investment before projects reach the stage where debt or equity investors commit capital. Ms. Morgado explains that upfront financing burdens excluded smaller firms and local developers who lacked balance sheet capacity to fund development activities without certainty of project approval or financing closure.

“The early-stage funding gap,” Ms. Morgado observed, “kept many capable developers out of the market simply because they could not afford to spend money on studies without knowing whether the project would proceed.”

Grants or concessional loans for development-phase expenses allow developers to advance projects to bankability without shouldering full early-stage risk. Greater market competition follows, as multiple participants can pursue projects simultaneously, rather than concentrating activity among a small number of firms with sufficient capital reserves to fund speculative development work. Competition improves tariff outcomes and accelerates deployment timelines as more developers compete for available market opportunities.

Development finance institutions view RELM as complementary to their traditional project finance roles, because it addresses a market failure that their standard lending products cannot resolve. Mr. Smeltzer notes that development finance institutions typically participate once projects demonstrate technical feasibility and secure necessary permits, but they cannot fund the preliminary work required to reach that stage. RELM fills the gap, creating a pipeline of bankable projects that can then access conventional project finance from development finance institutions and commercial lenders.





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UTILITY UNBUNDLING CLARIFIES INSTITUTIONAL ROLES

ZESCO’s historical integration of generation, transmission, and distribution created institutional conflicts that complicated private sector participation. Commercial interest in selling its own generation competed with regulatory responsibility to provide fair transmission access to independent producers. Unbundling separates these functions, assigning transmission operation to the Independent System and Market Operator while allowing ZESCO to continue generation and distribution activities without controlling infrastructure access.

Professor Mutale describes unbundling as politically difficult but technically necessary for market liberalization. Reforms require legislative changes, institutional capacity building, and careful management of ZESCO’s financial position during transition.

“Nobody said this would be easy, but maintaining the integrated structure would have meant continuing to discourage the private investment we desperately need,” Professor Mutale acknowledged.

However, maintaining integrated utility structures undermines private investment by preserving conflicts of interest that independent power producers cannot overcome through contracts or guarantees alone.

Unbundling processes also clarify regulatory oversight, as the Energy Regulation Board focuses on tariff setting and licensing while ISMO manages day-to-day grid operations. Institutional separation reduces opportunities for regulatory capture and ensures that transmission access decisions reflect technical criteria rather than commercial preferences. Transparent grid management builds investor confidence that approved projects will receive non-discriminatory treatment regardless of their competitive relationship with ZESCO’s generation portfolio.

Zambia’s regulatory transformation demonstrates that achieving ambitious capacity targets requires institutional reforms that extend well beyond project finance or incentive policies. Open Access regulations, ISMO development, utility unbundling, and RELM financing create conditions where private capital can deploy at scale. Structural changes address fundamental barriers that limited previous efforts to attract investment, offering a model for other African markets pursuing similar electrification goals through private sector participation.

“ Thank you, Gemma and your team, for the well organised Summit, short and impactful, with powerful topics. We benefited a lot. Thank you once again. ”

Felister Makumbinde, Acting CEO, Rural Electrification Agency, Zimbabwe



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Copper Belt Traders Race to Push Power Across Forgotten Borders **Clarence K. Chongo, AfricaWorks at Agora Village, LUSAKA | Saturday, 29 November 2025**

A mine manager in the DRC calls his banker in Johannesburg to demand why his operations halted, only to learn the transmission line meant to save him is still just a line on a map. He slams the phone down, realizing that all the power generation in the world means nothing if the physical cables connecting his pit to the grid remain too weak to carry the load.

The transmission challenge dominated the “Addressing Opportunities Head On” panel at the Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit in Livingstone, where infrastructure owners and regulators confronted the uncomfortable reality that generation capacity means nothing without the physical cables to move it.



THE TRANSMISSION BOTTLENECK

For decades, the conversation in African energy focused almost exclusively on generation—building more dams, firing up more coal plants, and laying out vast fields of solar panels. Yet, as Zambia and Zimbabwe open their markets, the critical choke point has shifted from production to transport. The electrons exist, but moving them from a solar farm in southern Zambia to a copper mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) requires a transmission network that has been neglected for too long.

Mr. Mulenga Bwalya, Head of Business Development and Power Trading at the Copperbelt Energy Corporation (CEC), identified transmission as the urgent frontier for regional growth. His company, which historically served as the model for privately owned transmission in Africa, owns the critical interconnector between Zambia and the DRC.

“The interconnector that exists between Zambia and the DRC is owned and operated by CEC,” Mr. Bwalya noted. “It’s available to all players in the sub-region.”

CEC is currently expanding the 220-kilovolt line specifically to support regional power trading. Mr. Bwalya emphasized that this expansion explicitly supports the broader market, extending well beyond CEC’s own operational needs. The infrastructure must be robust enough to handle the massive power imports required by the mining industry, the economic backbone of the region.

“In terms of transmission system,” Mr. Bwalya argued, “I think that as a sector and from a regional perspective we need to respond.”



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WHEELING CHARGES AND MARKET ACCESS

Opening the grid to private players introduced a complex commercial question: how much should the state utility charge independent traders to use its wires? This “wheeling charge” or “use of system charge” is the toll fee that makes or breaks the business case for power trading.

In Zimbabwe, the regulator intervened aggressively to ensure these fees did not strangle the nascent market. Mr. Howard Choga, Acting Managing Director of the Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZTDC), explained that the wheeling charge is data-driven and intended to cover the utility’s operational costs. “The regulator has intervened and regulated that charge so it has reduced to probably 50% of what we thought we needed,” Mr. Choga revealed.

This drastic reduction was a calculated move to support traders and Captive Power Producers (CPPs) who need to ship energy across the network. By lowering the toll fee, the regulator effectively subsidized the entry of private competitors, prioritizing market liquidity over the state utility’s immediate revenue maximization.

In Zambia, CEC welcomes the requirement for third parties to wheel power via their network. They view it as a new revenue stream rather than a threat. Mr. Bwalya sees opportunities to “cash in” by scheduling unused capacity on their lines for traders who need to link producers with consumers.

THE REGIONAL TRADING IMPERATIVE

The drive for transmission infrastructure extends beyond national borders. The vision is a fully integrated regional market where power flows seamlessly from surplus areas to deficit areas.

Ms. Kuso Kamwambi, Head of the Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU) in Zambia, listed regional trade as a medium-term priority.

“We are looking at how do we also strengthen the regional trade in terms of the interconnectors,” Ms. Kamwambi said. This involves upgrades, the construction of new lines, and “lots of conversations with our neighbouring countries.”

Standard Bank sees this regional integration as the next major banking opportunity. Ms. Rentia van Tonder, Head of Power Sector at the bank, noted that their investment focus has expanded to include transmission and regional integration projects. “We see Zambia as a key solution in terms of getting more power into the DRC,” Ms. van Tonder observed. “All our clients are mainly mining clients in the DRC and they all got the same problem.”

She predicted that the first major projects to be banked in this new era will likely focus on these regional opportunities. The bank’s strategy is to work with clients to manage transmission risk, effectively financing the cables that will turn the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) from a concept into a high-voltage reality.

The goal of “Mission 300”—connecting 300 million people in Africa over the next five years—relies entirely on this physical integration. As Mr. Choga pointed out, achieving such a target requires upscaling generation, transmission, distribution, and retail to unprecedented levels. The market is ready to trade; it is now a race to build the wires that make the trade possible.



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Unlock the Billion Dollar Vault Hidden Inside Zimbabwe's Energy Liberalisation

Clarence K. Chongo, AfricaWorks at Agora Village, LUSAKA | Saturday, 29 November 2025

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Zambia and Zimbabwe Erase the Zambezi Border to Survive the Climate Crisis

Clarence K. Chongo, AfricaWorks at Agora Village, LUSAKA | Saturday, 29 November 2025



Diplomats often speak of “brotherhood” in vague terms, but the recent energy crisis forced Zimbabwe and Zambia to turn rhetoric into survival strategy. When the drought hit hardest, the neighbour across the river stepped in long before any distant international aid agency, proving that in the Southern African power pool, geography is the only alliance that truly matters.

The depth of bilateral dependence became unmistakable during the opening ceremony of the Zimbabwe-Zambia Energy Projects Summit in Livingstone, where officials from both nations acknowledged that their energy futures are inseparable.

THE MIRROR IMAGE OF POLICY

The alignment between the two nations has become so precise that even senior officials struggle to distinguish their strategies. For decades, Zambia and Zimbabwe operated as distinct markets with separate regulatory frameworks, often competing for the same limited pool of international capital. Today, that competitive stance has dissolved into a collaborative urgency driven by necessity.

Ms. Kusobile Kamwambi, the Head of the Presidential Delivery Unit in Zambia, provided a candid moment of reflection during the summit that illustrated this profound shift. She admitted that as she sat in the audience listening to the presentations, the policy overlap caught her completely off guard.



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“Listening to the Deputy Minister from Zimbabwe, I realised that our targets are very similar,” Ms. Kamwambi remarked, detailing her confusion. “I kept looking up on stage to check if it was Zambia or Zimbabwe speaking.”

This convergence stems from a shared reality rather than coordinated talking points. Both nations face identical hydrological risks, possess similar mineral wealth, and are racing to electrify their economies on the same timeline. The realisation that their targets—and the challenges blocking them—are mirror images of each other has reshaped the strategic landscape. Ms. Kamwambi emphasised that this similarity dictates a unified



approach, asserting that Zambia requires Zimbabwe and the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC) to achieve its goals. The era of isolated national energy planning is effectively over; the new era demands a synchronised regional roadmap.

A HERITAGE CARVED BY THE RIVER

The bond between the two nations runs deeper than current political agreements or memorandum signings. It is written into the bedrock of the continent. Honourable Yeukai Simbanegavi, the Deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development for the Republic of Zimbabwe, described the relationship as an inevitable consequence of geography. She noted that the two countries share common resources and a heritage that binds them forever, creating a relationship that transcends the shifting winds of political administrations.

“Our two countries, Zimbabwe and Zambia, share a common heritage and common resources which forever bind us together as a people,” Honourable Simbanegavi stated.

“Congratulations on a successful event. Was honoured to join other champions working to close the Energy Gap in Africa.”

Kuso Kamwambi, Head, Presidential Delivery Unit Zambia (PDU), Zambia



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She highlighted that geology ignores national borders, pointing out that the nations share mineral seams that drive their respective mining sectors. The copper and lithium deposits do not stop at the border posts, and neither does the potential for economic extraction. This geological intimacy demands that they embrace bilateral projects of mutual benefit. Honourable Simbanegavi argued that by combining their efforts, the two nations are poised to make a massive impact on the wider SADC region and beyond. The potential for a unified resource bloc could redefine the economic weight of Southern Africa, but only if the energy infrastructure is built to support it.

Honourable Credo Nanjuwa, the Provincial Minister of Southern Province in Zambia, reinforced this sentiment from the host’s perspective. He framed the summit as a true reflection of a shared vision for securing a sustainable energy future.

“Zambia and Zimbabwe share deep historical, economic, and infrastructural ties,” Honourable Nanjuwa observed. He reminded the delegates that the transmission lines and trading protocols connecting these nations have existed for decades. However, he characterised the current moment as distinct from the past. While collaboration in the energy sector is not new, Honourable Nanjuwa noted that cooperation today is “more urgent and more strategic than ever.” The stakes have risen because the margin for error has vanished.

SURVIVAL THROUGH COOPERATION

The urgency Honourable Nanjuwa referenced is born from the brutal reality of climate change. The Zambezi River, which joins the two nations, serves as the lifeblood for their hydroelectric generation. For half a century, the Kariba Dam stood as a monument to engineering triumph, a concrete guarantor of cheap, abundant power. Today, it stands as a barometer of climate vulnerability. When the water levels drop, both grids suffer simultaneously. The drought does not respect visa requirements or sovereignty; it simply dries up the turbines on both banks.

However, this shared vulnerability has fostered a practical, almost reflexive support system. Ms. Kamwambi explicitly recognised the critical assistance provided by their neighbour during the recent crisis. When Zambia faced severe climatic challenges that threatened its grid stability, it was Zimbabwe that offered immediate support.





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“We recognise the pivotal role that the Zimbabwean government has also played in supporting us during this period when we faced climatic challenges,” she said.

This support goes beyond diplomatic niceties. It involves the complex, real-time trading of electrons and grid stability support that prevents total blackouts. It is a functional interdependence where the failure of one grid risks dragging the other down, and the stability of one offers a lifeline to the neighbour.

Mr. Monie Captan, the Deputy CEO for West Africa at Petrodex, viewed the conference setting



itself as a physical manifestation of this alliance. He described the location as reflecting the “deep partnership between Zambia and Zimbabwe,” joined by the Zambezi River and the Victoria Falls. His observation underscores the unique nature of this bilateral relationship. In other regions, rivers often serve as contested borders, sources of friction and dispute. Here, the Zambezi acts as a seam, stitching the two economies together into a single energetic entity.

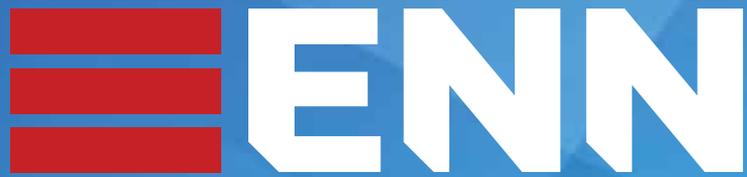
For investors and policymakers alike, the message is clear. These are not two separate markets separated by a river; they are a single, hydrological and economic ecosystem. The survival of one depends entirely on the stability of the other, transforming cross-border cooperation from a diplomatic choice into an operational necessity. Any investment strategy that treats them as isolated islands ignores the physical reality of the grid. The future of energy in this region is not Zambian or Zimbabwean; it is undeniably, inevitably Zambezian.

“ On behalf of the panel, I would like to express our appreciation for being part of such a well-curated and impactful summit. We thoroughly enjoyed the discussions, the networking, and the opportunity to contribute to important conversations that are clearly gaining momentum in the region.

The event was a real success from our perspective, and we hope it continues to grow from strength to strength. We would be delighted to stay engaged and to participate again in future editions.

Thank you again for hosting us so graciously - we look forward to crossing paths at future EnergyNet events. ”

Amanda Chipako, Senior Investment Officer, Proparco



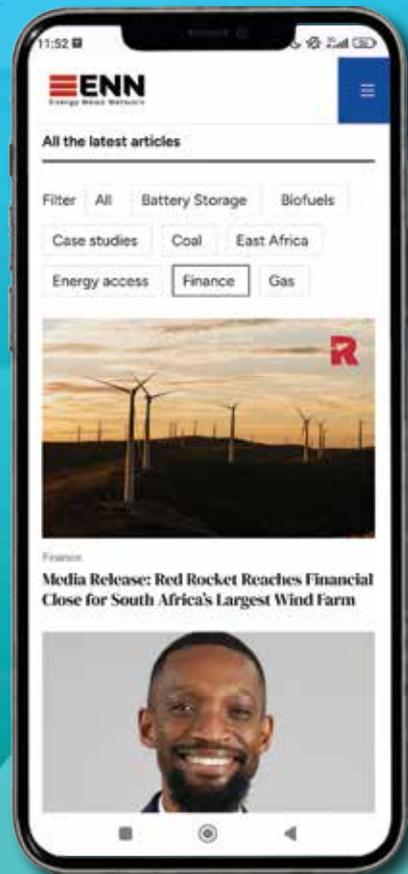
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