



2025
ANNUAL REPORT
UNDP ZAMBIA

People Partnerships Progress

Actions Borne from a Shared
Vision for a Prosperous Zambia





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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

8NDP	Eighth National Development Plan	NAP	National Adaptation Plan
ACP-EU	African, Caribbean and Pacific – European Union	NISIR	National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research
AI	Artificial Intelligence	OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative	REA	Rural Electrification Authority
CPD	Country Programme Document	RR	Resident Representative
DRR	Deputy Resident Representative	SCRALA	Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II
ECOWYERT	Empowering Cross-Border Women and Youth Entrepreneurs in Regional Trade	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia	SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UN	United Nations
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GEF-SGP	Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
GEI Power	Zambian energy firm (project developer, Choma Solar)	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
ILO	International Labour Organization	USD	United States Dollar
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	WFP	World Food Programme
MW	Megawatt	WHO	World Health Organization



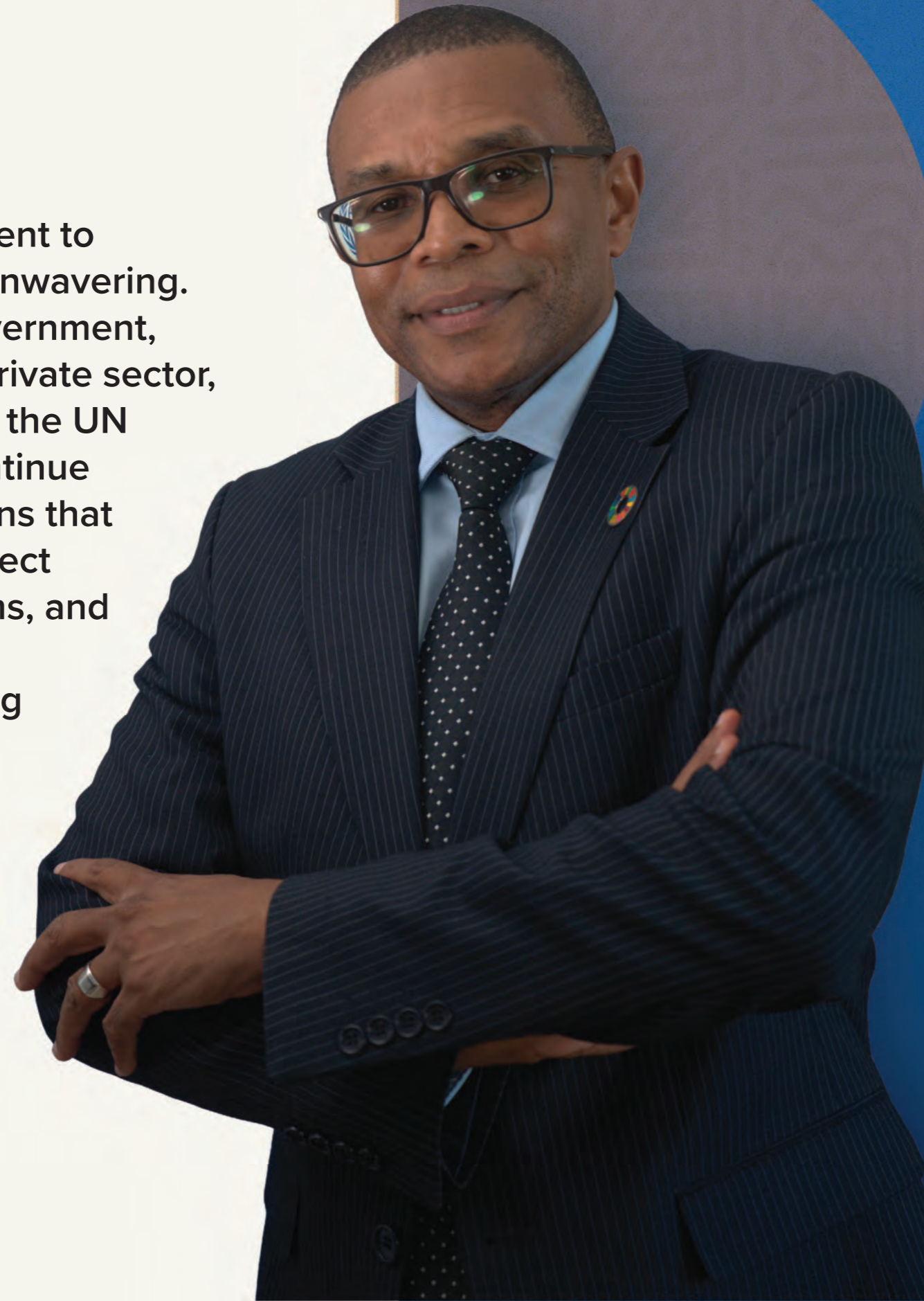
Credit: From field to mill — a young member of the Loanja Rice Growers cooperative in Mwandi shows off the rice mill that's turning their harvest into a business. | Photo: Vanessa Wematu Akibate/UNDP Zambia

Foreword

Together for a Resilient and Inclusive Zambia

“

UNDP’s commitment to Zambia remains unwavering. Together with government, civil society, the private sector, communities, and the UN family, we will continue advancing solutions that uplift people, protect natural ecosystems, and build institutions capable of steering Zambia toward Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals — Leaving No One Behind.”



The year 2025 was a defining moment for Zambia’s development trajectory. Against a backdrop of one of the worst droughts in decades, persistent fiscal constraints, and widening inequalities, Zambia demonstrated extraordinary resilience, leadership, and determination. Throughout the year, UNDP worked alongside the Government and partners to advance transformative, people centred development—mobilising more than USD 60 million to strengthen inclusion, accelerate climate action, expand green energy access, and modernise governance systems.

Despite the scale of the drought, which reduced hydropower generation by over 80% and worsened food insecurity, Zambia continued to make economic gains. Preliminary estimates show GDP grew by 3.8% in 2025, matching 2024’s growth, buoyed by mining, agriculture, ICT, transport, and strategic fiscal reforms that strengthened the Kwacha and improved investor confidence. UNDP’s work in 2025 aligned closely with national priorities under the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP) and contributed to the country’s long-term vision for a digital, climate-resilient, gender-responsive economy.

Across rural communities, women and men adopted climate smart agriculture practices and strengthened their incomes. In remote clinics, health workers prepared to transition to reliable solar power. Youth and women innovators entered new green and digital markets. National systems—from electoral governance to natural capital accounting—became stronger, more transparent, and more inclusive.

UNDP’s commitment to Zambia remains unwavering. Together with government, civil society, the private sector, communities, and the UN family, we will continue advancing solutions that uplift people, protect natural ecosystems, and build institutions capable of steering Zambia toward Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals—leaving no one behind.

James Wakiaga PhD
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE - UNDP ZAMBIA

Zambia at a Glance

The conditions that shaped our work

These contextual dynamics shaped UNDP’s focus on resilience, inclusion, and institution building across all pillars of programming. The 2025 drought exposed structural vulnerabilities — particularly in rural provinces where crop failure compounded food insecurity. It also accelerated demand for the solutions UNDP and partners were already delivering: solar energy, climate-smart agriculture, and social protection at scale.



POPULATION

21.7M

50.5% women · 50%+ youth

(Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022)



HYDROPOWER LOST

80%

drop in Lake Kariba output due to the 2023/24 El Niño drought

(UNECA, 2025)



INFLATION

11.2%

end-year inflation rate

(Zambia Statistics Agency, 2025)



FOREIGN RESERVES

\$5.5B

mid-year

(Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2025)



NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

8NDP

UNDP aligned across all pillars



GDP GROWTH

3.8%

sustained growth amid fiscal headwinds

(Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2026)

Impact at a Glance

Key Statistics and Highlights

Progress in Motion

PEOPLE REACHED

3.7 M+

citizens, farmers* & households

***60% WOMEN FARMERS**



1.3 million

CITIZENS REACHED THROUGH CIVIC EDUCATION



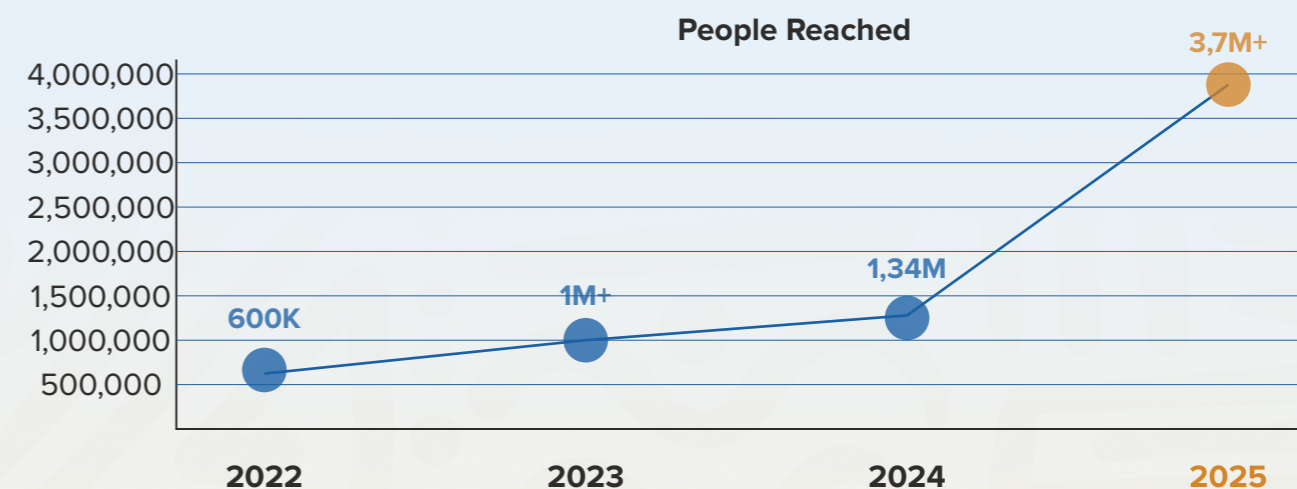
148,382

FARMERS ACCESSED LOCALISED CLIMATE FORECASTS



970,000

HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED THROUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION



RESOURCES MOBILISED

\$260M

across climate & governance



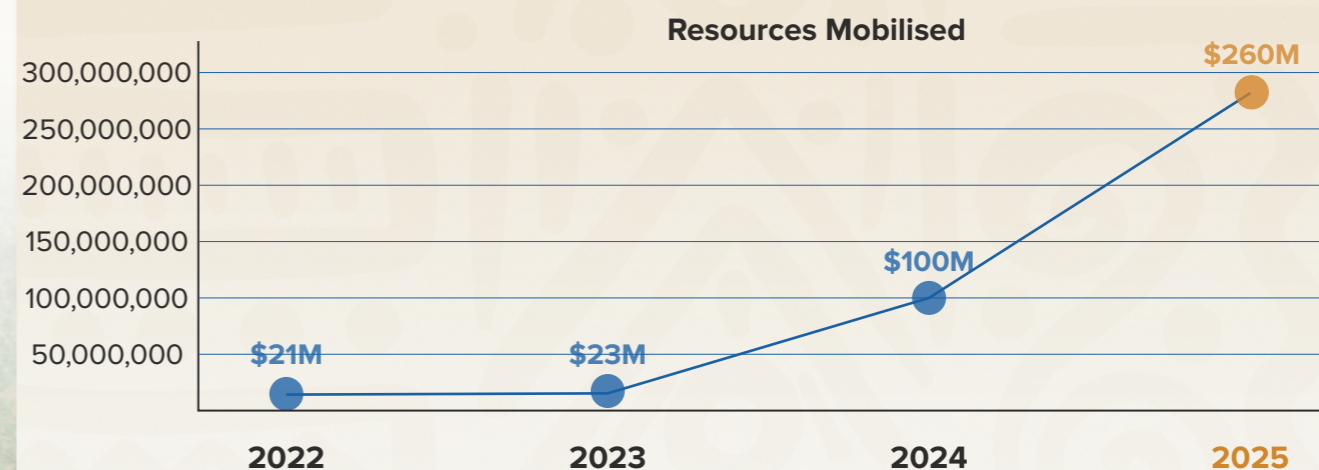
\$200M

IN GREEN BONDS UNLOCKED THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BIOFIN AND SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION AND LUSAKA SECURITIES EXCHANGE



\$60M

MOBILISED FOR YOUTH, CLIMATE AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMMES



CLEAN ENERGY

60MW

productive facilities and households to access solar energy



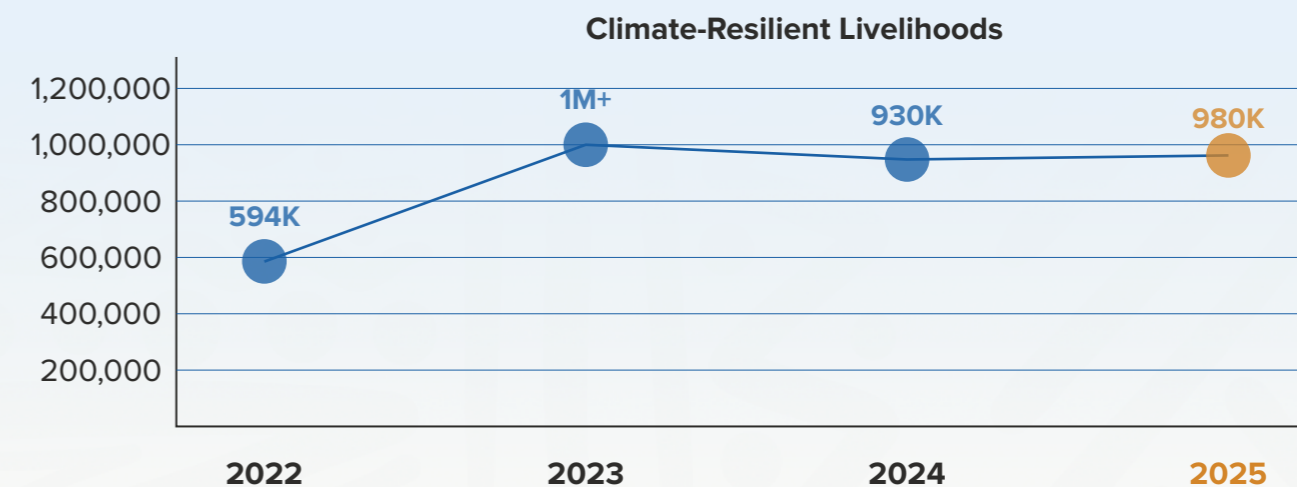
65,000

HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES TO RECIEVE POWER FROM 60MW CHOMA SOLAR



426

HEALTH FACILITIES AND ZAMMSA WAREHOUSES PREPARED FOR SOLARISATION



2025 Results Theme

People. Partnerships. Progress

How collaboration shaped results in 2025

No single institution delivers development alone. In 2025, every major result in this report was made possible through partnership. UNDP worked alongside the government, development partners, the private sector, the UN system, and communities to align resources, expertise, and deliver at scale.

These partnerships were operational, mobilizing over USD 60 million, unlocking new financing mechanisms, and accelerating implementation across all three pillars. Through initiatives like blended finance for renewable energy, joint programming on climate adaptation, and coordinated support for electoral preparedness, collaboration enabled speed, reach, and true sustainability.

What defines this work is not just who we partnered with, but how. Our approach rests on three commitments:

- People**
at the centre of every result we deliver
- Partnerships**
that turn a shared vision into delivery at scale
- Progress**
measured, lasting, and built to scale



Our Partners

The partners below are the driving force behind the results shared in this report.

*Funds received in 2025 and set for implementation in 2026; ** Funds received in 2025 and set for implementation in 2026 - 2030 alongside 5 other countries



ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme



Government of Canada



Government of Denmark



The Elsie Initiative Fund



European Union



Government of Germany



Global Disability Fund



The Global Environment Facility



The Global Fund



The Green Climate Fund



Government of India*



Government of Ireland



Government of Italy



Government of Japan



Japan International Cooperation Agency



Government of Luxembourg



Mastercard Foundation*



Government of the Netherlands



Government of Norway



The Republic of Korea



Spotlight Initiative



Standard Chartered Zambia



SEPA/Naturvårdsverket



Government of Sweden



The United Kingdom



UN Trust Fund for Human Security

View from the Programme Desk

Reflections from the Deputy Resident Representative

“

2025 was a year of stretch and delivery. The drought tested every assumption about what was achievable, and the team responded by accelerating — not retreating. Behind every figure in this report sits a programme decision, a partner conversation, and an operational push aimed at Leaving No One Behind. These reflections look at what worked, where we leaned hardest, and what we are carrying into 2026.

Laurent Rudasingwa
DEPUTY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE - UNDP ZAMBIA



These reflections can be understood across four key areas:

- 1 Programmatic Success**

Climate-smart agriculture reached 960,000 farmers, Solar for Health prepared 426 facilities, and civic education engaged 1.3 million citizens. The strength of 2025 was integration — portfolios converging at the community level.
- 2 Partnerships**

Every result this year was a partnership result. Government anchored each intervention; the UN family brought complementary mandates; bilaterals deepened thematic depth.
- 3 Operations**

Operations carried real weight in 2025 — audit readiness, accelerated procurement, and surge capacity for drought response.
- 4 Looking to 2026**

Three priorities: complete Solar for Health for 5M people; support a peaceful, inclusive election; and scale climate finance through carbon markets and the green bond pipeline.

2025 Portfolio Snapshot

Programmatic Overview

UNDP Zambia delivered 24 programmes across three pillars in 2025, contributing to 14 Sustainable Development Goals — every one of them in partnership with government, the UN system, multilateral funds, or bilateral donors.

1.45M
people reached
new voters registered ahead of 2026 elections

1.05M
people reached
through climate & livelihoods programmes (60% women)

5M
people to be reached
through the Smart Health Systems project, and the Health4Life project

970,000
people reached
households reached through social protection programmes

556,000
people reached
through clean energy access

10,000
young people supported
through youth-led MSMEs & youth driven income-generating activities





CPD PILLAR 1 Sustainable Natural Resources Management & Resilience (Part 1)

Results of the Clean Energy and Environment Unit

Despite a devastating drought, UNDP and partners reached nearly one million farmers with the tools to adapt — localised forecasts, solar-powered irrigation, conservation agriculture, and diversified livelihoods. In Mambwe, new irrigation schemes and a solar agro-bulking centre helped farmers rebuild incomes and stabilise food production after the drought.

At landscape scale, UNDP advanced Zambia's Natural Capital Accounting Strategy, integrating ecosystem value into national planning and positioning the country for smarter climate finance decisions.



FARMERS SUPPORTED

960,000

Climate-Smart Agriculture



GENDER INCLUSION

60%

Women Among Farmers Reached



FARMERS SUPPORTED

148,382

Accessed Localised Climate Forecasts



REFORESTATION

16,000

Community Forests Conserved



CAPACITY BUILDING

1,756

State and Non-State Actors Trained in Natural Resource and Renewable Energy Governance



POPULATION

10

Districts Adopted Gender-Responsive Wetland Guidelines

CPD Pillar 1: Sustainable Natural Resources Management & Resilience Livelihoods (Part 1) (cont.)

STORY

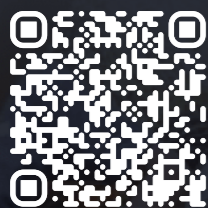
It is All Connected

How the Community Recovery and Resilience Facility is Set to Transform Livelihoods in Mambwe District with a Gender Lens

In Mambwe District, the disaster equation is relentless. Caught between droughts and floods in the Luangwa Valley, communities face failing crops, shrinking water sources, and deepening poverty — burdens that fall heaviest on women, who walk long distances for water, navigate heightened risks of gender-based violence, and are left with little time or opportunity to build a better life. This is the cycle the Community Recovery and Resilience Facility (CRRF) was designed to break.

By rehabilitating water points, establishing solar-powered kiosks, training women in leadership and climate-smart agriculture, and strengthening institutions that protect against abuse, CRRF is tackling vulnerability from every angle at once. The insight driving it all is simple but powerful: reducing risk, building capacity, and empowering women aren't separate goals — they are the same goal.

Read the Full Story



Drawing water directly from the Zambezi River, the Malombe Centre Pivot Irrigation Scheme is freeing 73 farming households in Sioma District from decades of dependence on rainfall — and giving them a reliable path from seed to sale, season after season.



22KW Solar Mini Grid for Tauya Community Irrigation Scheme.

In drought-prone Chirundu, a solar-powered drip irrigation scheme is giving over 45 farming households — most of them women-led — a reliable path to food security and income, no matter the rainfall.



The Productive Uses of Electricity Project is implemented by UNDP Zambia under the Climate Promise Initiative, supporting Zambia's Nationally Determined Contribution through renewable energy solutions that build rural livelihoods and climate resilience.



UNDP supported the NAP Expo where farmers from Chirundu and Kazunguala district, panelists from UNDP and the Government of Zambia, presented the SCRALA project's integrated approach is building resilience for Zambian communities



A beneficiary of the Productive Uses of Electricity project arranging freshly harvested crop of tomatoes, made possible through solar-powered irrigation support.

Pillar 1 Partners

- Government of Denmark
- The Green Climate Fund
- Government of Ireland
- Government of Italy
- The Republic of Korea
- Government of Luxembourg
- Government of the Netherlands
- Government of Norway
- SEPA/Naturvårdsverket
- Government of Sweden

CPD PILLAR 1
**Sustainable Natural
 Resources Management
 & Resilience** (Part 2)

When the drought cut hydropower by over 80%, Zambia's energy vulnerability was impossible to ignore. UNDP responded by accelerating the transition — completing preparatory works for 426 solar health facilities, advancing the 60MW Choma Solar Project, and deploying mini-grid pilots to off-grid communities where grid extension is not financially viable.

Reliable power means households stay running, small businesses can begin to scale, and in healthcare it means cold chains for vaccines, functioning emergency wards, and maternal health services that don't shut down after dark.

RESILIENT HEALTHCARE

426

Health Facilities Prepared for Solarisation

RELIABLE ENERGY

60MW

Solar Capacity Fed into the National Grid

CLEAN ENERGY ACCESS

65,000

Household to Receive Clean Power from Choma Solar

GREEN FINANCING

\$200M

Green Bond Mobilised for Biodiversity & Renewable Energy

CARBON MARKETS

Article 6

Implemented for Carbon Market Readiness Support Delivered

CPD Pillar 1: Sustainable Natural Resources Management & Resilience Livelihoods (Part 2) (cont.)

STORY

Shining a Light on Zambia's Future

Choma Solar Power Project Breaks Ground with UNDP Support

Zambia generates 84% of its electricity from hydropower — a system brought to its knees by one of the country's worst droughts on record. With over half the population already without electricity, the urgency for an alternative has never been greater. That alternative is now taking shape in Choma District, where construction has officially begun on the 60 MW Choma Solar Project, set to power over 65,000 households and businesses with clean, renewable energy.

Backed by UNDP and developed in partnership with Zambian energy firm GEI Power, the project is more than a power plant — it promises over 1,600 jobs, skills transfer, and a blueprint for how private investment and technical support can turn climate ambition into concrete infrastructure.

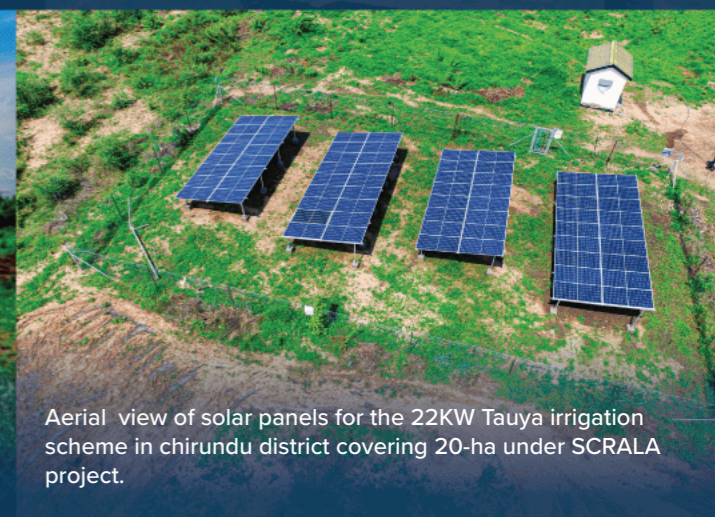
Read the Full Story



Through the Smart Health Systems project, Sekelela Health Post is receiving solar power at approximately 3 kiloWatt-peak delivered through five solar photovoltaic panels, alongside a satellite connectivity system.



22KW Tauya Solar powered irrigation scheme in Chirundu district covering 20-ha under SCRALA project



Aerial view of solar panels for the 22KW Tauya irrigation scheme in Chirundu district covering 20-ha under SCRALA project.



Installed 11kv off-grid solar system (powered by 20 solar panels and 2 batteries) under the Productive Uses of Electricity in Chipangali District, Eastern Zambia.

Pillar 1 Partners



Government of Denmark



The Global Fund



Government of Ireland



Government of Italy



Government of India*



The Republic of Korea



Government of Luxembourg



Government of the Netherlands



Government of Norway



CPD PILLAR 2

Inclusive Economic Diversification & Growth

Results of the Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Unit

At over half the population, Zambia's youth are driving change. Ten MineTech startups are tackling mining challenges with AI and robotics, the ECoWYERT programme (with the Mastercard Foundation) is opening regional markets to rural women and youth-led enterprises, and the new National Youth Development Strategy provides the country's first unified framework for youth economic empowerment. UNDP also advanced formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining, strengthening pathways for women miners and linking operators to larger value chains.

As drought deepened hardship, social protection became a lifeline — reaching 970,000 households, with USD 5.4M in infrastructure for 42,000+ displaced persons in Maheba and Mayukwayukwa. Three new disability inclusion tools now embed inclusion into planning and budgeting by design.



CPD Pillar 2: Inclusive Economic Diversification & Growth (cont.)

STORY

Mining for Tomorrow

Africa's Brightest Innovators Unveiled at timbuktoo MineTech Hub in Zambia

Africa holds over 30% of the world's mineral wealth — but the continent's brightest minds are determined to claim more than just the resources. In Lusaka, ten startups from nine African countries gathered for a landmark moment: the inaugural Demo Day of the timbuktoo MineTech Hub, proving that the solutions to mining's biggest challenges will be built in Africa, for Africa.

From AI-powered mine safety to eco-friendly mineral processing, these young innovators aren't waiting for answers to be imported — they're engineering them right here. Meet the trailblazers redefining the future of mining.

Read the Full Story



Mable, Patience, and Retiana are the Mukuba UniPod's first NextGen Managers, designing programmes and mentoring the next wave of Zambian innovators. The Next Gen Managers and their cohort of interns supporting operations in the Mukuba UniPod.



The Lwampa River crossing point before the construction of a new foot bridge to improve community access and connectivity in Mayukwayukwa's Resettlement Scheme



YouthConnekt Zambia 2025 empowered young people with opportunities for innovation, networking and leadership.



Young entrepreneurs with ideas that are still taking shape, enrolled in RootLab Ignite at the Mukuba UniPod. They left with the tools, mentorship, and confidence to build them into something real.



Ruth Nakawala, Chairperson of Zimba Mining and an ASM beneficiary of the Supplier Development Programme, showcasing mineral samples from the mine.



A collaborative Youth-Led MSME Upskilling Roadshow, held by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts and UNDP, focused on equipping Zambia's next generation of entrepreneurs with essential business skills.

Pillar 2 Partners



ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme



Global Disability Fund



Government of Japan



Japan International Cooperation Agency



Mastercard Foundation*



Standard Chartered Zambia



Government of Sweden



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



CPD PILLAR 3

Good Governance, Inclusive & Participatory Society

Results of the Governance and Gender Unit

With 2026 elections approaching, UNDP worked with the Electoral Commission of Zambia to embed the Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy — a foundation for more equitable participation. More than 1.3 million citizens received civic education to help them navigate the electoral process, counter misinformation, and participate meaningfully.

Security institutions also transformed. Digital policing platforms cut approval times from 21 days to 90 seconds. And Zambia's first gender-responsive police facility in Kafue is removing long-standing barriers to women in law enforcement.

CIVIC EDUCATION

1.3M

Citizens Reached Through Civic Education

ELECTORAL SECURITY

13,385

Police Officers Trained in Electoral Security

ENDING GBV

900

Officers Trained in Survivor-Centred SGBV Response

DIGITAL POLICING

21 days → 90 sec

Deployment Approval Time Reduced Through Digital Systems

GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICING

40

Additional Female Officers to be Housed in Zambia's First Gender-Responsive Police Facility

CPD Pillar 3: Good Governance, Inclusive & Participatory Society (cont.)

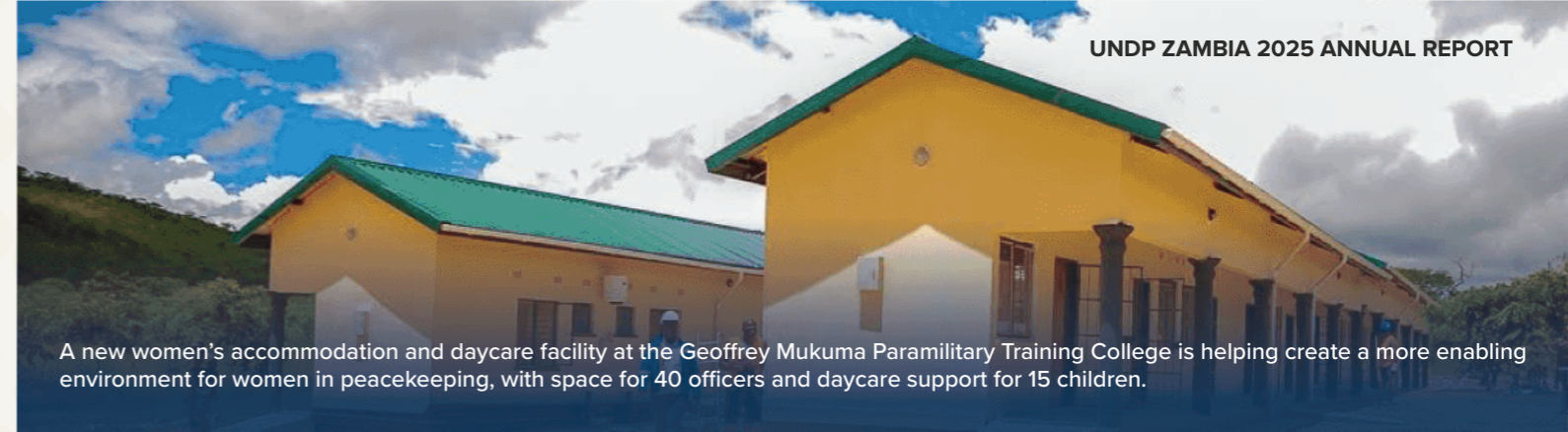
STORY

Breaking Barriers

Women in Uniform on the Frontlines of Peace Keeping Operations

For decades, peacekeeping has been a field dominated by men — but Zambian women police officers are changing that, one mission at a time. Through the Women in Peacekeeping Operations Project, funded by the Elsie Initiative Fund, 29 women have been trained and deployed to some of the world's most challenging conflict zones, armed not only with firearms training but with skills to teach, counsel, and transform communities from within.

Memory, Lilian, Ruth — their names may be unfamiliar, but their impact is undeniable. From empowering South Sudanese women to start businesses, to teaching 35 female officers to read and write in English, these women returned home not just as peacekeepers, but as pioneers. Their message is clear: when women are on the frontlines, peace looks different.



A new women's accommodation and daycare facility at the Geoffrey Mukuma Paramilitary Training College is helping create a more enabling environment for women in peacekeeping, with space for 40 officers and daycare support for 15 children.



Women officers participate in the Zambia Police Service Mentorship and Coaching Training Programme, building confidence, leadership and readiness for peacekeeping roles.



Women police officers receive certificates after completing the Zambia Police Service Mentorship and Coaching Training Programme, marking a step forward in strengthening their readiness for peacekeeping and peace support operations.



Through the Spotlight Initiative 2.0, women in Chipangali rebuild their lives through income-generating activities, turning GBV recovery into pathways for empowerment, resilience and economic independence.



Chella, a trained sniper with the Zambia Police Service, is among the women officers benefiting from pre-deployment support for peacekeeping missions under the Elsie Initiative Fund.

Pillar 3 Partners



Government of Canada



The Elsie Initiative Fund



European Union



Government of Germany



Government of Ireland



Government of Luxembourg



Government of the Netherlands



Spotlight Initiative



Government of Sweden



The United Kingdom

ONE UN Delivering As One



UNDP's role in joint UN delivery

Five SDGs. Eight UN partnerships. One coordinated response. In 2025, UNDP joined sister agencies in delivering at scale across climate, governance, health, energy, and equality.

UNDP served as co-lead of the UN Results Group on Governance in 2025, driving integrated action on democratic governance, human rights, and institutional strengthening. Joint programming with the UN family amplified impact across every pillar:



2 ZERO HUNGER

WITH

FAO & WFP

Through SCRALA — climate advisories, weather-index insurance, and irrigation support.

900K+
smallholder farmers reached



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

WITH

UNICEF & WHO

Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and mental health challenges among the youth and health facility upgrades

750+
total health facilities being solarized and connected stable internet



5 GENDER EQUALITY

WITH

UN Women & UNFPA

Gender-responsive budgeting briefs and civic engagement ahead of 2026 elections.

1.3M
citizens reached via civic education



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

WITH

UNICEF & ILO

Mainstreaming renewable energy in devolved government funds — Eastern Province.

40+
local leaders empowered



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

WITH

UN Women & OHCHR

Co-led Results Group on Governance — democratic governance & institutional reform.



LOOKING AHEAD

Zambia's Path to 2026

Building on the results and lessons from 2025, UNDP will focus on the following strategic priorities in 2026:

- 

Scale climate adaptation and resilience financing — expand nature-based solutions, early warning systems, and ecosystem protection.
- 

Complete the Smart Health Systems rollout — uninterrupted power for 426 facilities, network connectivity for 751 facilities, and training for 1,000+ personnel — reaching 5+ million people.
- 

Strengthen democratic governance and electoral preparedness — inclusive, transparent, and peaceful 2026 election cycle.
- 

Deepen digital transformation — e-governance, data systems, and digital inclusion across public institutions.
- 

Expand economic opportunity — entrepreneurship, skills, market access, and financial inclusion for women and youth.

The people are ready. The partnerships are built. The progress continues.



Credit: Malizhi is part of the first cohort of national trainers of frontline ICT officers helping bring reliable power and digital connectivity to rural clinics, ensuring remote communities receive faster, more reliable healthcare. The training was provided alongside Smart Zambia Institute. Photo by: Vanessa Wematu Akibate/UNDP Zambia



SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Team Powering Progress



James Wakiaga, PhD
Resident Representative



Laurent Rudasingwa
Deputy Resident Representative



Gregory Salli
Head of Gender and Governance
Assistant Resident Representative



Aline Kayihura
Operations Manager



Carol Mwape Zulu
Head of Environment and
Clean Energy



Chali Chisala Selisho
Head of Inclusive and
Sustainable Growth



Ibrahima Gueye
Programme Compliance Oversight
and Monitoring Specialist



Kampamba Mubanga
Gender Specialist



Saleban Omar
Senior Programme Adviser for
Health, Energy and Climate Change

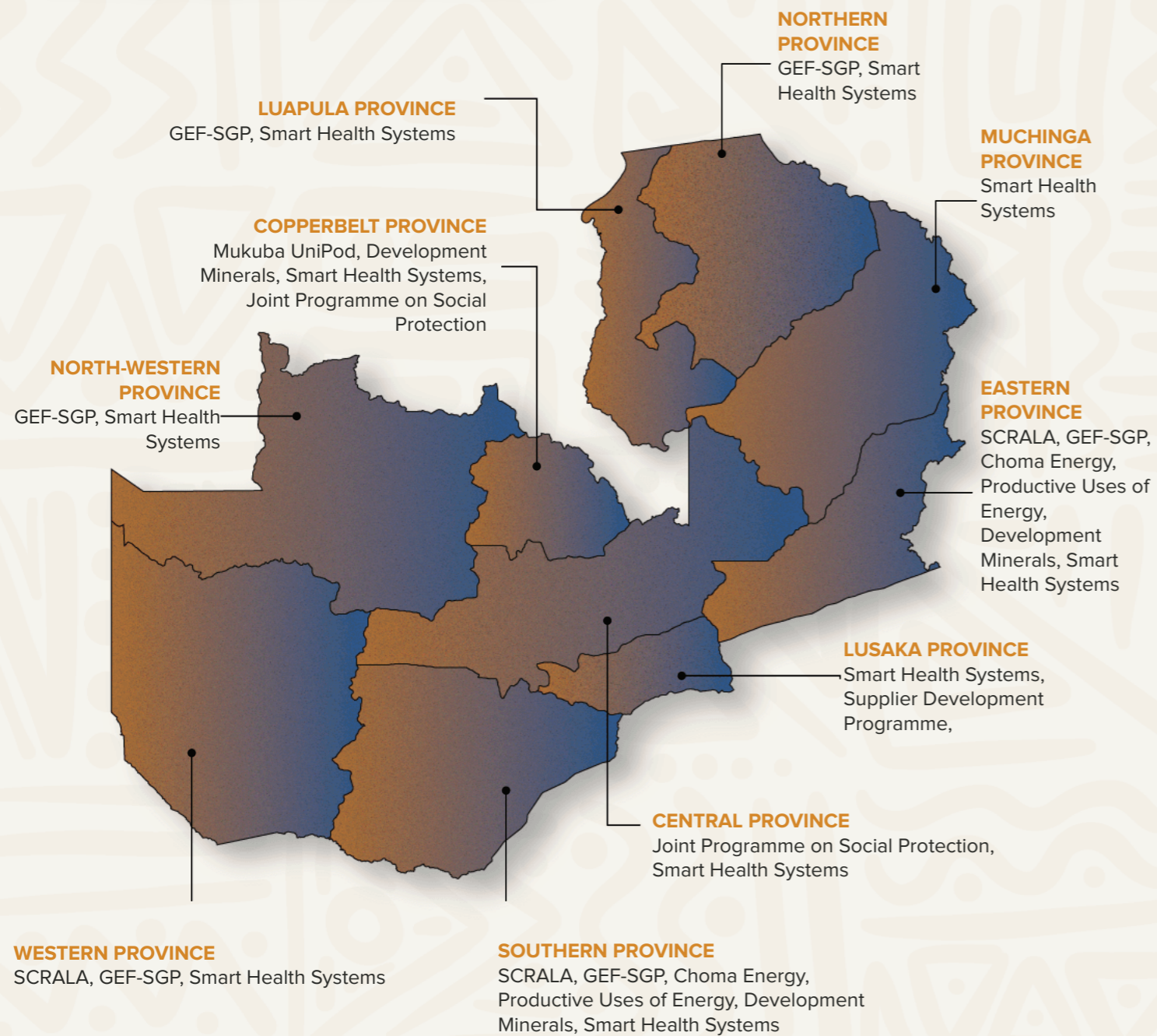
The Team Powering Progress (CONT.)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank You

UNDP extends its deepest appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, whose leadership created the enabling environment for results in 2025. To our development partners, UN sister agencies, civil society, traditional leaders, private sector, and — most importantly — the communities across all ten provinces whose participation made this work real.



Credit: The collaborative Youth-Led MSME Upskilling Roadshow, a success story from the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts and UNDP, focused on equipping Zambia's next generation of entrepreneurs with essential business skills. Photo by: Mariah Tembo/UNDP Zambia

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United Nations Development Programme

Alick Nkhata Road
Lusaka, Zambia

www.undp.org/zambia