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WEEKLY EDITION | MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Monday 19 to Friday 23 October 2026 | Lusaka | zambianeconomist.com

INVESTMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Turning promises into public benefit

Public accounts, new investment, regional trade and the services that reach households.



Zambian community fruit market, 13 October 2010. Rahul Ingle / SuSanA Secretariat, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0. Archive photograph, cropped and resized; people pictured are not interview subjects.

By The Zambian Economist Analyst

Investment needs to reach daily life.

This week's coverage connects industrial ambition with public accountability. Fertiliser investment raises questions about jobs and farm costs. Audit findings ask what happened to public money and what services communities received.

The edition brings together 16 edited highlights from Monday through Thursday, including Thursday's latest coverage. Follow each link for the complete article.

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Where public money meets public services

The 2025 audit and an independent citizens' guide put spending, arrears and delivery in focus.

The Zambian Economist Team | 19–23 October 2026

What the 2025 audit asks of government

19 October 2026



Acting Auditor General Patricia Malaila at an earlier OAG budget preparation meeting. File photograph: Office of the Auditor General, Zambia.

The Auditor General's report records K3.56 billion in outstanding Ministry of Health obligations at 31 December 2025 and K626.64 million in mining penalties uncollected by 31 August 2026. Arrears are bills government owes; uncollected penalties are assessed revenue still outstanding. Neither category should automatically be described as money stolen.

The report also raises farm-input eligibility and payroll-control concerns. Its favourable opinion on the presentation of national financial statements does not erase these operational findings. The follow-up needs to identify who must act, what has been settled or recovered, and which controls have changed. The findings retain their audit cut-off dates; publication does not establish their present resolution status.

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A citizens' guide to where the money went

19 October 2026



Lubinda Sinyani, economist and author of the independent citizens' guide to the 2025 Auditor General's report. Photograph: The Zambian Economist.

Lubinda Sinyani's independent 26-page guide explains the 2025 public accounts in relation to everyday services. Receipts were K218.42 billion and payments K216.30 billion. Receipts included borrowing, so the K2.11 billion cash surplus does not show that spending was financed without loans.

The guide distinguishes approved budgets from releases and unpaid obligations from missing funds. It records 374 new boreholes drilled against 947 planned, giving communities a concrete delivery question. The guide is independent analysis, rather than an official Office of the Auditor General publication or endorsement. Readers can reach both the guide and original report through the linked article.

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Fertiliser investment and a hotter working day

The UCF expansion and the heat alert connect national developments with household livelihoods.

The Zambian Economist Team | 19–23 October 2026

UCF expansion raises the jobs and fertiliser stakes

20 October 2026



President Hakainde Hichilema and officials at the UCF urea plant expansion groundbreaking in Chilanga. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Hichilema welcomed a US$1.6 billion UCF urea expansion at Wonderful Industrial Park in Chilanga. The company's ambition is 10,000 direct jobs, but the announcement does not separate existing positions from additional employment, or construction roles from permanent operating jobs.

Greater domestic fertiliser production could help farmers if supplies meet quality standards and arrive at competitive delivered prices before the application window closes. Local suppliers also need clear tenders, technical requirements and payment terms. Construction milestones, recruitment details and reliable district-level availability will show how the investment reaches workers, businesses and farms.

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Heat alert continues into the close of the week

20 October 2026



Chisokone Market, Kitwe. Archive image: Edu-Tourist / Flickr via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0.

The Zambia Meteorological Department's hot-weather alert covers 20–24 October. The advisory calls for drinking water, shade and reduced strenuous outdoor activity during peak afternoon hours. Employers and market managers can help by making rest, water and safer schedules practical.

The department advises immediate medical attention for dizziness, confusion or fainting. Households should give particular attention to children and older people. Farmers are advised to provide livestock with water and shade and store fish feed properly. The bulletin does not give district-specific maximum temperatures or quantify crop losses; those outcomes should not be assumed from the alert.

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Trade and peace in the regional economy

From the Great Lakes to COMESA, the policy agenda centres on investment, connectivity and jobs.

The Zambian Economist Team | 19–23 October 2026

Great Lakes peace enters the growth debate

19 October 2026



President Hakainde Hichilema with delegates at the ICGLR meeting in Lusaka. Photo: President Hakainde Hichilema's Official Facebook Page.

President Hakainde Hichilema linked peace in the Great Lakes region to livelihoods, jobs and shared economic growth at the ICGLR meeting in Lusaka. The published coverage places regional stability alongside resource value addition and economic cooperation.

The message connects diplomatic engagement with the practical conditions for trade and investment. The article's focus is the economic case for peace; it should not be read as a verified tally of jobs already created by the meeting.

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After the Bangkok Annual Meetings

19 October 2026



Bangkok skyline and lakeside view. Photo: © Ministry of Finance and National Planning, #mofnp, Lusaka-Zambia.

Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane congratulated Thailand, the IMF and the World Bank on the 2026 Annual Meetings. Zambia's priorities in the publication's account centre on financing, investment and employment.

The diplomatic message provides a record of engagement. Readers following the financing agenda should distinguish discussions and expressions of support from a signed commitment, an approved project and money actually disbursed.

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Zambia takes its trade priorities to Harare

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



President Hakainde Hichilema in an official portrait in front of the Zambian flag and Coat of Arms Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

The summit preview announced Hichilema's planned attendance at the 25th COMESA Summit in Harare on Thursday, 22 October. Zambia's stated priorities were fewer trade barriers, stronger regional value chains and better connectivity.

The summit agenda included Zimbabwe taking over the chair from Kenya. For Zambian exporters, the useful next evidence is practical: changes in border procedures, transport connections and access to buyers. The report previewed the meeting; it did not establish that the proposed trade improvements had already been agreed or implemented.

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The next stage of public spending scrutiny

New committee leadership will face questions about evidence, implementation and accountability.

The Zambian Economist Team | 19–23 October 2026

Kawina takes the Public Accounts Committee chair

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Solwezi Central MP Poho Kawina at Parliament Buildings, Lusaka. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Solwezi Central MP Poho Kawina has become chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, succeeding Warren Mwambazi. The committee examines public spending through the Auditor General's reports and calls controlling officers to explain unresolved queries.

The 2025 report gives the new leadership a substantial agenda. Hearings can make institutional responses visible, but citizens will also need evidence that recommendations result in corrective action. A useful follow-up distinguishes explanations offered at a hearing from amounts recovered, valid bills settled and control failures corrected.

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Sabao returns unopposed as deputy chairperson

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Chikankata MP Jacqueline Sabao takes the oath in the National Assembly of Zambia Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Chikankata MP Jacqueline Sabao has been re-elected deputy chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee without opposition. She will deputise for Kawina in the 15-member committee.

The deputy chair presides in the chairperson's absence and supports the management of hearings. Sabao's return provides continuity as the committee takes up the 2025 audit. The importance of the appointments will become clearer through the quality of questioning, the evidence institutions supply and the action that follows Parliament's recommendations.

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Kangombe returns to energy water and tourism oversight

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Sesheke East MP Romeo Kangombe in the National Assembly chamber. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Sesheke East MP Romeo Kangombe has returned to the Committee on Energy, Water Development and Tourism, this time as an ordinary member. The appointment was made on 20 October as the Fourteenth National Assembly organised its sessional committees.

Kangombe said he would support the committee with his experience after previously chairing it. Its portfolio places energy reliability, water services and tourism development within the same oversight structure. Committee membership is a governance appointment; it is not evidence that a new power project or service improvement has already been delivered.

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Forests shade and emerging economic voices

Plantation targets, urban resilience and a new platform for student members of EAZ.

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ZAFFICO sets out its plantation ambition

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



ZAFFICO and Ministry of Green Economy and Environment representatives following their engagement on forestry development. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

ZAFFICO reports managing 62,733 hectares of pine and eucalyptus plantations and aims to reach 100,000 hectares by 2028. The implied increase is 37,267 hectares, about 59%. These are a reported starting area and a future target, rather than additional plantations already established.

Green Economy Minister Gilbert Siame has called for structured out-grower partnerships connecting smallholders with larger buyers. Farmers need terms covering establishment costs, species, quality, pricing, harvesting, transport and payment. The meeting account announces no enrolment window, guaranteed return or farmgate price. Clear risk-sharing and support through the years before harvest will determine whether the proposed partnerships provide dependable income.

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Urban heat puts tree cover in the policy debate

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Central Lusaka from above, with sparse canopy and low-rise sprawl absorbing the October sun. Photo: Lupali via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

In his assessment of African cities and extreme heat, Dr Kelvin Kamayoyo argues that tree loss, weak waste management and unplanned settlement have reduced urban resilience. He calls for an urgent response on trees, protected green land and circular waste systems.

The contribution treats shade and urban planning as economic infrastructure. Heat can affect the usability of markets, transport and workplaces, while long-term changes require land protection and maintenance as well as planting. This is a contributed argument about policy priorities. Specific temperature and climate projections in the full article should be read with their source dates and forecast qualifications.

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EAZ opens a Student Spotlight invitation

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



KNEBA research fellowship classroom. Source: KNEBA.

The Economics Association of Zambia has announced Student Spotlight for its website and social media platforms. Participants must be EAZ student members and members of their university club; enrolment at a university or college alone does not meet both conditions.

Submissions should include a story, the institution's name, a clear photograph and social media handles, sent to the EAZ Secretariat. The notice gives no submission deadline or first publication date. The opportunity is a public feature, rather than an announced scholarship, internship, cash award or job. Students can use the linked article to reach the submission guidance and contacts.

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Records medicines and the public interest

Information requests, a hospital inspection and a DEC investigation feature in the Thursday roundup.

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An information request can turn a concern into a record

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Rural communities depend on boreholes and wells promised in development plans. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Nathan Meleki's contribution connects unfinished public projects with citizens' ability to seek records under Zambia's Access to Information Act. Its borehole example starts with a practical question: what happened between the approved plan and the service residents received?

The contribution identifies budgets, expenditure records, contractor details, schedules and progress reports as useful documents to ask about, subject to the law's provisions and exemptions. Obtaining a record is a way to establish facts, rather than proof of wrongdoing. Read the full contribution for its discussion of the request process and the relevant legislation.

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Livingstone hospital visit needs a results update

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Health Minister Prof. Roma Chilengi. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

Health Minister Roma Chilengi inspected Livingstone University Teaching Hospital to assess services, medicines, medical supplies and facility conditions, according to the Ministry of Health's announcement.

The account gives no medicine-stock figures, detailed findings or corrective timetable. It therefore establishes that an inspection took place, rather than demonstrating that shortages were resolved. Patients need a follow-up explaining what was checked, what problems were found and what changed. The announcement also contains no new procurement award or spending commitment.

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DEC reports a seizure and four apprehensions

Thursday roundup 22 October 2026



Boxes and vehicles pictured in connection with DEC's account of the operation in Southern Province. Image from the linked Zambian Economist article.

The Drug Enforcement Commission says an operation involving officers in Kazungula and Livingstone led to four apprehensions and the seizure of 100 boxes of Benylin with Codeine. It alleges that 15 boxes were transferred from a truck into a Honda Fit; those boxes form part of the 100, rather than an additional consignment.

DEC says the medicines and both vehicles were seized and investigations were continuing. The allegations have not been determined by a court. The statement gives no prosecution outcome, verified retail value or confirmed bottle count. Apprehension does not establish guilt.

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Read the figures with their definitions

Dates, baselines and the difference between targets and results matter.

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Figure	Measure	What to keep in mind
K3.56bn	Health obligations at end 2025	Government bills outstanding, not an automatic theft total.
K626.64m	Mining penalties at 31 August 2026	Assessed revenue uncollected at the audit cut-off.
US$1.6bn	Announced UCF expansion	Track construction and delivery against the announcement.
10,000	UCF direct employment target	Not established as entirely additional jobs.
62,733 / 100,000 ha	ZAFFICO reported area / 2028 target	The latter is a future plantation ambition.
20–24 October	Heat-alert period	Includes Friday 23 and Saturday 24 October.

Reading room and publication notes

Full articles and primary sources

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