Meteorological Services Newsletter

August 2026



Minimising Risk Through Science

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The Directors Foreword



Mrs. R. Manzou

Director, Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe

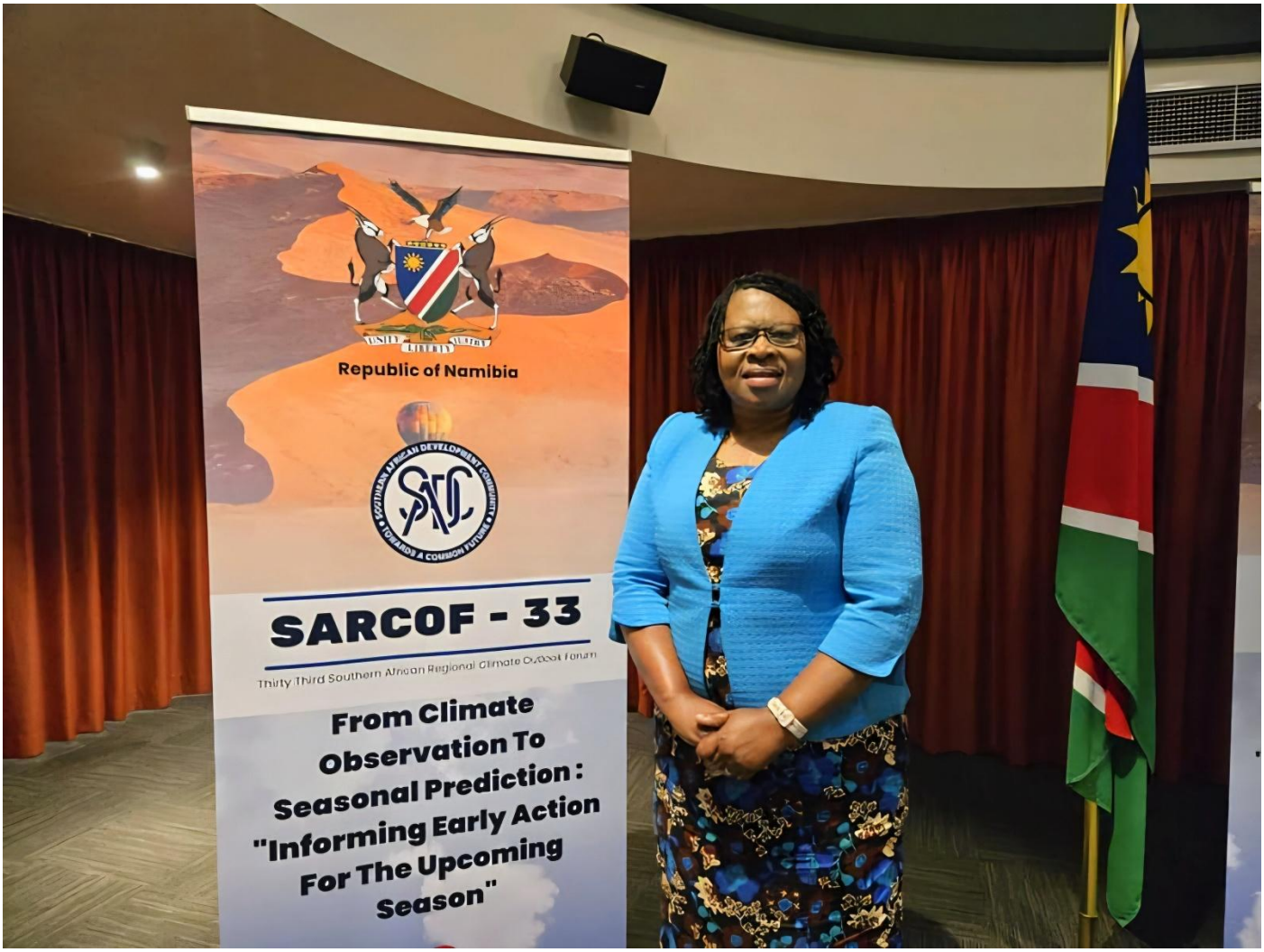
I am pleased to present an overview of our ongoing efforts to strengthen climate resilience, advance early warning systems, and empower communities across Zimbabwe through actionable climate science. Under our vision of delivering weather and climate services for a resilient future, the Department remains dedicated to minimising risk through rigorous scientific innovation and proactive stakeholder engagement. A central highlight of this month was Zimbabwe's active participation in the Thirty-Third Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-33) held in Swakopmund, Namibia, under the theme "From Climate Observation to Seasonal Prediction: Informing Early Action for the Upcoming Season". Our participation, alongside the technical contributions made during the preceding Climate Experts Meeting, reinforces our commitment to regional scientific collaboration. By translating regional forecasts into localised, practical applications, we ensure that key climate-sensitive sectors, including agriculture, water resource management, energy, and disaster risk reduction, are fully equipped to plan effectively for the upcoming 2026/2027 season.

In alignment with global and regional frameworks, we officially unveiled the 2026/2027 Seasonal Rainfall Forecast and launched the National Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) Initiative. This critical initiative places early action at the very heart of disaster risk management, ensuring that reliable warnings reach every citizen to protect lives and livelihoods. Furthermore, through sub-national engagements such as the WISER Action First co-design workshop in Mutare, we continue to bridge the gap between producers and users of climate information, fostering true co-production of climate advisories tailored to community needs. As we navigate evolving climate dynamics, the Meteorological Services Department will continue to build strong partnerships, enhance observational networks, and deliver timely, actionable climate services.

From Climate Forecasts to Early Action: Zimbabwe Participates in SARCOF-33

MSD

Zimbabwe, through the Meteorological Services Department (MSD), participated in the Thirty-Third Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-33). The Southern African Development Community (SADC), through the SADC Climate Services Centre (SADC-CSC), convened the forum in Swakopmund, Namibia, from 25 to 28 August 2026. The forum brought together National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, climate experts, sector specialists, decision-makers and users of climate information from across the SADC region to assess the upcoming seasonal climate outlook and strengthen the application of climate information in preparedness, planning and early action. For Zimbabwe, participation in SARCOF-33 provided an important platform for the MSD to contribute to the regional climate outlook process while strengthening the availability and application of seasonal climate information for national planning.



The Director Mrs. R. Manzou at SARCOF-33 in Swakopmund Namibia

The outcomes of the forum supported the interpretation and communication of seasonal climate information to key climate-sensitive sectors, including agriculture, water resources, disaster risk management, health and energy. SARCOF-33 was held under the theme, “From Climate Observation to Seasonal Prediction: Informing Early Action for the Upcoming Season.” The theme highlighted the growing need to move beyond simply producing climate forecasts towards ensuring that forecast information was translated into timely, practical actions that reduce risks and strengthen resilience among communities and institutions. Zimbabwe’s participation followed the Climate Experts Meeting (CEM), held from 17 to 24 August 2026, which brought together climate experts from SADC Member States to undertake the technical assessment and analysis required for the development of the regional seasonal climate outlook. The CEM served as a critical component of the SARCOF process, providing the scientific foundation for the forecast presented during the forum.

The SARCOF-33 process further provided an opportunity for Zimbabwe to engage with climate information users through the Climate Users Forum. This interface strengthened collaboration between producers and users of climate information and promoted the co-production of climate services, advisories and early warning information that responded to the needs of communities and climate-sensitive sectors. Through its participation in SARCOF-33, Zimbabwe continued to strengthen regional collaboration in climate science and services while advancing the use of reliable, timely and actionable climate information. These efforts contributed to strengthening preparedness, supporting informed decision-making and building resilience to climate variability and extremes across the country and the wider SADC region.



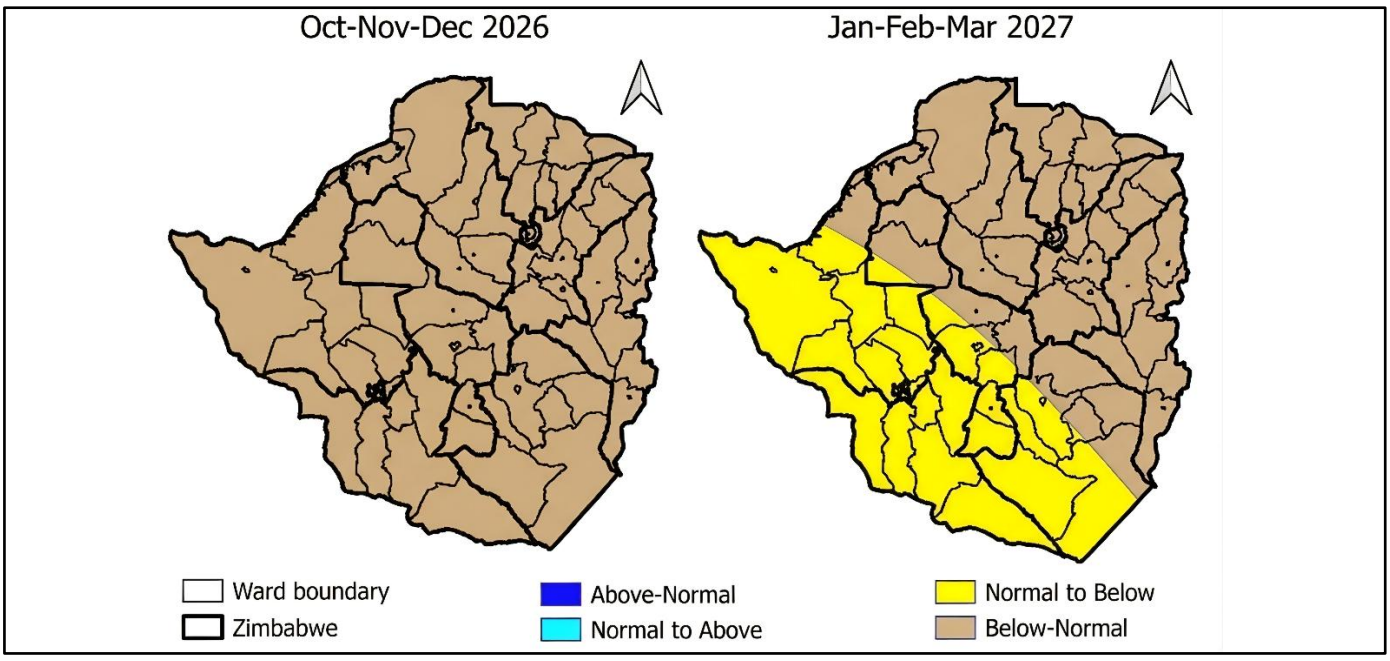
Highlights From The 2026/2027 Seasonal Rainfall Forecast

MSD

The forecast was issued against a background of key oceanic and atmospheric drivers influencing the SADC region for the 2026/27 season, spanning October 2026 to March 2027. ENSO is currently in its warm El Nino phase and is projected to persist throughout the forecast period, while the Indian Ocean Dipole is positive and expected to remain so until the end of January 2027 before transitioning to neutral in February. Collectively, these drivers increase the likelihood of below normal rainfall across Zimbabwe, though actual distribution will ultimately depend on the response of local and short-term weather systems.

For the October to December 2026 period, the forecast indicates a high probability of below normal rainfall across the entire country. From January to March 2027, the southern and western parts of the country are expected to receive normal rainfall, though with a bias toward below normal totals, while the rest of the country is likely to experience below normal conditions.

Warmer than normal conditions are expected for the first three months of the season. Furthermore, the start of the season is projected to be highly erratic, with a significant portion of the country expected to see no effective start to the rainfall season, drawing parallels to the 2023/24 and 2015/16 analogue seasons that both experienced widespread onset failure.



October – December and Januarry – March Rainfall Seasonal Outlook

Zimbabwe Unveils The 2026/27 Seasonal Rainfall Outlook

MSD

The Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Dr. Evelyn Ndlovu (MP), served as the guest of honour at the National Climate Outlook Forum held at the Rainbow Towers Hotel in Harare on 11 September 2026, where she officially presented the 2026/27 Seasonal Rainfall Outlook. Delivering her keynote address, Minister Ndlovu emphasised that the seasonal climate statement is a critical national planning tool designed to help the government, businesses, and communities prepare early and make informed decisions before weather hazards turn into disasters. She highlighted the importance of strong early warning systems by referencing past events like Cyclone Idai, while also praising the launch of the Early Warnings for All initiative in Mutare last month.

Turning to the specifics of the forecast, the start of the season is projected to be highly erratic, with a significant portion of the country expected to see no effective start to the rainfall season, drawing parallels to the analogue seasons of 2023/24 and 2015/16 which both experienced widespread onset failure. Consequently, the Minister urged all sectors, especially agriculture, water, energy, and disaster management, to use this outlook for planning and preparedness, calling for a whole-of-government approach to strengthen resilience and protect lives and livelihoods in line with Vision 2030. Everyone is encouraged to stay tuned as MSD will continue to provide daily and 10-day forecasts which are crucial for short-term planning.



Honourable Minister Dr. Evelyn Ndlovhu delivering her speech at the National Climate Outlook Forum



Chief Director Mr. W. Zhakata giving his remarks at the National Climate Outlook Forum



Mr. B. Maketa giving his remarks at the National Climate Outlook Forum

Zimbabwe Launches Early Warnings for All Initiative, Putting Early Action at the Heart of Disaster Risk Management

MSD

On 20 August 2026 in Mutare, Zimbabwe launched its national Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative. Hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife through the Meteorological Services Department (MSD), the scheme shifts the focus from simply predicting severe weather to anticipating its real-world impacts and acting in advance. First introduced globally by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in 2022, EW4All aims to protect every person worldwide with life-saving early warning systems by the end of 2027.



Participants posing for a group photo at the Early Warnings For All Launch event

The project operates across four main pillars: risk knowledge, monitoring and forecasting, warning communication, and response capabilities. In a country regularly hit by floods, droughts, and tropical cyclones, a warning is only useful if people can act on it. Zimbabwe is addressing this through Action-Based Forecasting, which links weather reports directly to predefined actions and safety thresholds. Delivering these warnings requires a coordinated effort across

Zimbabwe's National Action Plan links several key organisations:

Meteorological Services Department (MSD): Provides weather forecasts and climate monitoring.

Department of Civil Protection: Directs overall disaster risk management and local preparedness.

Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA): Tracks hydrological risks and water resources.

Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ): Ensures communication networks deliver alerts to the public.

Zimbabwe Red Cross Society: Leads local community engagement and practical, ground-level prep.

International Partners: Entities such as the World Food Programme and UK development partnerships offer vital technical and financial support.



The Director Mrs. R. Manzou giving her remarks at the EW4ALL launch event

multiple sectors. Ultimately, an early warning system is only as effective as its final reach. Success depends on ensuring clear, trusted alerts reach local communities in accessible languages, with women, young people, traditional leaders, and disabled residents directly involved in shaping the response. When communication works, success is marked by quiet prevention. Everyday decisions, such as a farmer moving livestock, a family evacuating early, or a school adjusting its day, safeguard lives and protect hard-won economic progress long before a storm hits.

The EW4ALL Launch event in Pictures

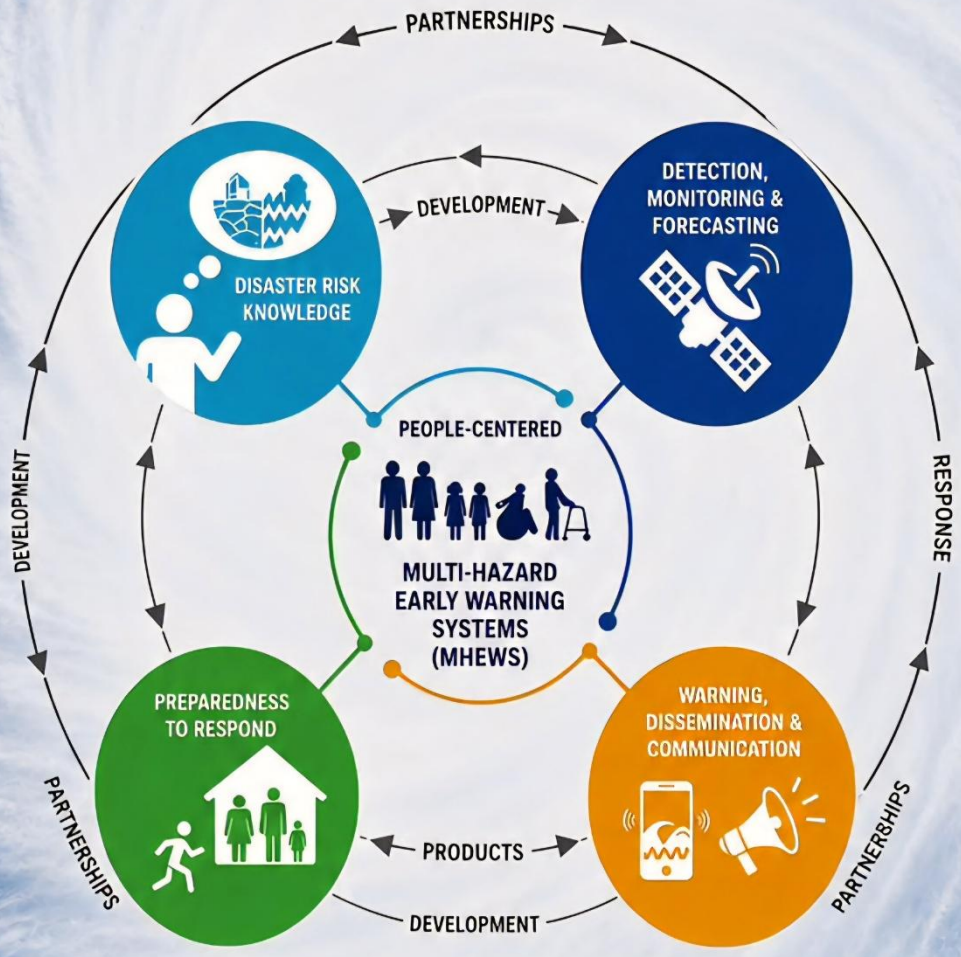


Mr. J. Ngoma giving some remarks at the EW4All launch event



Participants applauding during the EW4All launch event engagements

EARLY WARNINGS FOR ALL
INITIATIVE



THEME:
Building Resilience through Effective Early Warning Systems

Government of Zimbabwe | Meteorological Services Department | ZINWA | Civil Protection Zimbabwe | creating a level playing field | Zimbabwe Red Cross Society | World Meteorological Organization | WISER | UK International Development | Met Office | World Food Programme

TOGETHER FOR A SAFER, RESILIENT AND CLIMATE-READY ZIMBABWE

Your Weather and Climate Services for a Resilient Future

MSD Holds the Sub-National Action-First Co-Design Workshop in Mutare

MSD



Mr. M. Manjowe giving his remarks at the WISER Action First event

Moving from weather prediction to genuine community preparedness requires a fundamental shift in how warnings are communicated and understood. Between seventeen and nineteen August 2026, the Meteorological Services Department and the Department of Civil Protection convened a pivotal gathering at Manica Skyview in Mutare with backing from the WISER Action-First in Africa Initiative. Around sixty delegates from provincial and district bodies, health, agriculture, education, water networks, local communities and civil society assembled for the Inclusive Sub-National Action-First Co-Design Workshop. The core objective was bridging the gap between scientific forecasting and practical, localized early action across Manicaland.

The opening day centred on understanding local risk through the mapping of hazard hotspots and critical infrastructure alongside historical disaster analysis. The Federation of Organizations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe guided vital conversations regarding gender equity, disability and social inclusion to ensure marginalized voices shape disaster planning from the ground up. Day two turned attention toward converting forecasts into proactive measures as sectoral groups established hazard triggers for agriculture, health and education.

Testing the system defined the final day through a realistic tabletop simulation that challenged participants on decision making, inter agency coordination and warning dissemination. Insights gathered from this exercise will directly feed into stronger local Standard Operating Procedures and the broader National Action-Based Forecasting Roadmap. Ultimately, the workshop highlighted that successful early warning relies less on complex data production and more on delivering clear information early enough for meaningful intervention. By blending scientific forecasting with indigenous knowledge and inclusive community perspectives, Manicaland is actively transforming reactive disaster management into a proactive culture of climate resilience.

The WISER Action-First Engagements in Pictures



A delegate from the Department of Civil Protection speaking during a discussion session

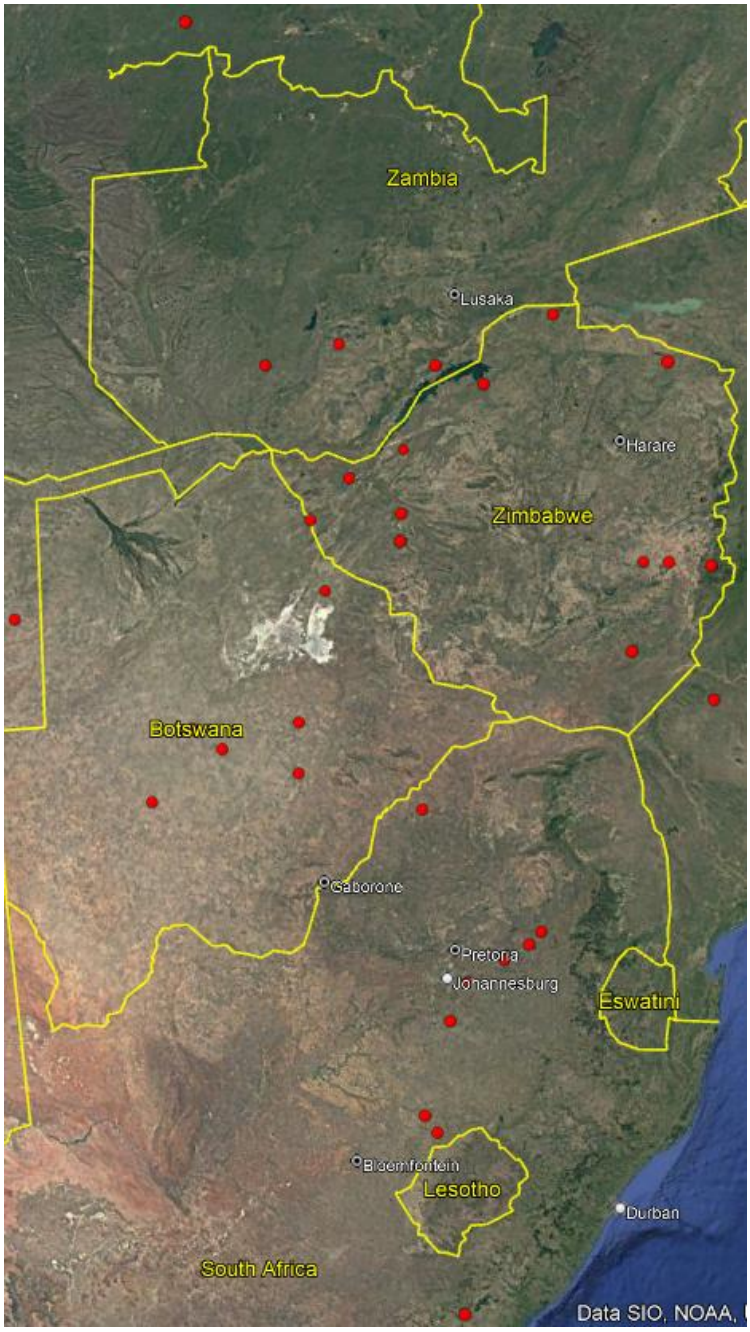


Community members invited to witness and contribute to the proceedings of the workshop

August 2026 Zimbabwe Seismic Activity Summary

Monalisa Muponda

In August 2026, 42 seismic events were recorded: 11 local, 25 regional, and 6 teleseismic (distant) earthquakes. Regional seismic activity was dominated by earthquakes originating in Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and Mozambique.



Map of events recorded in August 2026, with the epicentres shown as solid red circles

Largest Local Earthquake

The largest local earthquake had a magnitude of 3.7, with its epicentre located in Hwange. Most local earthquakes had epicentres in Hwange and Binga, both of which are part of the Zambezi Basin. Activity in this area is influenced by both the Kariba Dam (reservoir-induced seismicity) and the Deka Fault (plate tectonics). This region extends from the northern tip of the country south-westwards through Lake Kariba, Devil's Gorge, and the Deka Fault to the western border, making it the most seismically active area in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe–Mozambique eastern border area also frequently exhibits high seismic activity. Most earthquakes in this region are natural tectonic events linked to the East African Rift System (EARS), which extends into Mozambique. Manicaland remains a seismically active region, as evidenced by the numerous moderate-to-large earthquakes occurring there each year.

Several earthquakes in neighbouring South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique were also detected by the national seismic monitoring network. Many of the events recorded in South Africa and Botswana are interpreted as mining-induced earthquakes associated with extensive deep-level mining operations. In contrast, earthquakes originating in Mozambique are predominantly tectonic, caused by active faulting related to the East African Rift System.

Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe

Vision

Towards a Climate-Resilient Nation in the face of Socio-Economic impacts of extreme Weather, Climate, and Seismic Events by 2030.

Mission Statement

To empower communities with the weather, climate, and seismic knowledge needed for informed decision-making using innovative technologies.

Our Core Values

Accountability

Teamwork

Equality

Integrity

Innovation

Timeliness

User-Centricity

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