



Meteorological Services Department Newsletter



May 2026

Minimizing Risk Through Science

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The Directors Foreword



Mrs. R. Manzou

Director, Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe

First and foremost, the Meteorological Services Department (MSD) family extends its warmest congratulations and a most cordial welcome to Mr. Simon Masanga following his appointment as the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. A distinguished career civil servant, Mr. Masanga brings a wealth of administrative expertise from his previous tenure as the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, where he championed critical social safety nets, capacity-building programs, and sustainable livelihood frameworks for vulnerable groups. His deep institutional knowledge, having also served as Principal Director for Labour, Administration, and Social Welfare, equips him perfectly to steer MECW. In an era where the MSD is aggressively shifting from delivering raw data to providing actionable socio-economic information, Mr. Masanga's extensive background in protecting vulnerable communities aligns seamlessly with our mission to strengthen food security, improve climate resilience, and advance the global "Early Warnings for All" initiative. We look forward to working closely under his guidance to elevate Zimbabwe's environmental, climate adaptation, and disaster risk management agendas.

May has brought extraordinary opportunities to showcase our commitment to global meteorological excellence. We were deeply honored to host Dr. Agnes Lawrence Kijazi, Director of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Office for Africa, who conducted a comprehensive tour of our facilities. Dr. Kijazi observed the full spectrum of our operational ecosystem: from the high-velocity operations within the Central Forecast Office, to the meticulous digitization and data-rescuing efforts in our Database Unit, and onto the rigorous maintenance and calibration workflows of our Engineering Section. This visit highlighted how our distinct units intersect as critical links in a single, unyielding operational chain, all working in unison to ensure life-saving alerts reach Zimbabwean communities before severe weather strikes. On the regional stage, the MSD delegation played a pivotal role at the Sixth Ordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management, hosted in Masvingo from May 11 to 14, 2026. Operating under the summit's timely theme, "Building Back Better Together," our technical team contributed vital meteorological expertise that helped shape major regional breakthroughs. These included accelerating the operationalization of the SADC Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and establishing cross-border frameworks to ensure smooth, rapid emergency relief movements during climate-induced crises.

Closer to home, we are immensely proud to celebrate the rollout of our groundbreaking project translating and broadcasting weather updates into Ndebele for communities across Bulawayo and the Matabeleland provinces. This initiative ensures that language is never a barrier to climate safety, providing citizens with access to vital, life-saving information in their mother tongue. By leveraging local radio networks, this program directly fulfills Pillar 3 (Warning Dissemination and Communication) of the United Nations' global "Early Warnings for All" (EW4All) initiative, perfectly embodying our national commitment to "Leaving no one behind". As we look ahead, the MSD remains resolutely dedicated to delivering accurate, timely, and accessible science to protect vulnerable livelihoods, enhance disaster resilience, and safeguard lives across Zimbabwe.

MSD Welcomes Mr. S. Masanga as Permanent Secretary

The Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe congratulates and welcomes Mr. S. Masanga following his appointment as Permanent Secretary.



Mr. S. Masanga

Permanent Secretary for Environment, Climate and Wildlife

Breaking Weather Barriers in Bulawayo and Matabeleland: Ndebele Forecasts Take Flight

Brighton Tembo

In a groundbreaking move, the Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe (MSD) has launched a new project to translate weather updates into Ndebele, bringing vital forecasts directly to local communities in their own language. Supported by the Minister of Local Government through the Department of Civil Protection, the main goal of this initiative is simple: to ensure that language is never a barrier to safety, especially for those who feel most comfortable using their mother tongue. A passionate MSD team brought this initiative to life, featuring Baba Maketa, Chiposi Ngulube, Rodgers Hugh Munyira, Austin Masikinye, Manengu Nyoni, Linos Ncube, Violet Ngwenya, Batisani Ndlovu, Siphosethu Sibanda, and Brighton Tembo. The program rolled out late last year to incredible enthusiasm from local listeners, who quickly embraced the broadcasts. By spreading the word in the language of the land, the department is not only enhancing community safety but also celebrating local cultural pride and linguistic heritage.

Supporting the Global "Early Warnings for All" Initiative

This local project directly connects to a massive global mission by the United Nations known as the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, which aims to ensure every person on Earth is protected by life-saving early warning systems. By utilizing local radio, Zimbabwe's new program directly fulfils Pillar 3 of EW4All: Warning Dissemination and Communication. This specific pillar focuses on making sure alerts reach the people at risk, highlighting that warnings must be clear, easy to understand, and adapted to local languages. This breakthrough ensures that residents of Bulawayo and the Matabeleland provinces stay well-informed come rain or sunshine. Ultimately, it keeps everyone in the loop and perfectly aligns with Zimbabwe's national mantra: *"Leaving no one behind."*

MSD **HEAR DAILY WEATHER UPDATES IN NDEBELE**

TUNE INTO WEATHER REPORTS! **100.3 MHz (FM)**

BROADCAST TIMES

- 6:30 AM** (MORNING UPDATE)
- 7:00 AM** (MID-MORNING REPORT)
- 8:00 AM** (DAILY WEATHER)

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NEWS UPDATES

WMO Regional Director Dr. Agnes Kijazi Tours MSD Operations

MSD Harare, Zimbabwe

We were honoured to host a distinguished guest last week at the Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe. Dr. Agnes Lawrence Kijazi, Director of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Office for Africa, conducted a tour of our facilities to review how weather and climate services are operating on the ground. Accompanying Dr. Kijazi was our own Director Mrs. R. Manzou. Dr. Kijazi met with the forecasters, data officers, and technicians who drive our daily operations. Her visit focused on tracing the entire lifecycle of weather data, from initial observations to the final forecasts, warnings, and climate records that protect our communities.



Dr. Kijazi (right) conversing with the Director Mrs. Manzou (middle) and Deputy Director Pasipangodya (left)

Inside the Central Forecast Office

The tour kicked off in the Central Forecast Office, the nerve centre where meteorologists blend satellite imagery, global climate models, and local observations into daily forecasts and severe weather alerts. The team walked Dr. Kijazi through our urgent protocols for issuing flash flood warnings and explained how these alerts are quickly disseminated to civil protection units and broadcast partners. A key point of discussion was how our forecasters combine local, indigenous knowledge with numerical data. This unique integration helps improve forecast accuracy in a region where rainfall patterns can shift rapidly.

Preserving Climate History in the Database Unit

Dr. Kijazi also visited the Database Unit, which safeguards decades of Zimbabwe's weather data records. Staff demonstrated the painstaking and vital work of "data rescuing" the process of taking historical data from fragile paper ledgers, digitizing the records, and applying strict quality control checks. This meticulous work ensures that Zimbabwe's climate history is accurately preserved and successfully submitted to regional and global databases.



Mr. Mugadza in blue t-shirt showing Mrs. Kijazi the Hardcopy Data Archive

Keeping Systems Alive: Engineering & Instrument Operations

A forecast is only as good as the instruments tracking it. In the Engineering Section, technicians demonstrated how they maintain our vast network of automated weather stations, radars, and communications links. The team highlighted their field repair procedures, calibration schedules, and the in-house training programs used to build local technical capacity. The tour concluded at our outdoor instrument site. Here, technicians showed the precise setup and calibration required for temperature sensors, rain gauges, and wind instruments. They emphasized how proper site exposure, levelling, and metadata management are strictly maintained to meet WMO standards, ensuring total data quality right from the moment of measurement.

The Safety Chain

The visit wrapped up with a holistic review of how our various departments intersect. The forecast office, database unit, engineering section, and instrument site do not work in isolation; they are links in a singular operational chain. It is the strength of this coordinated chain that ultimately determines whether life-saving warnings reach Zimbabwean communities in time when severe weather strikes.

MSD and Partners Train in R-Instat Data Analysis to Power e-PICSA

MSD Harare, Zimbabwe

In a major step toward building climate resilience, technical personnel from the Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe (MSD) recently concluded a rigorous two-week training workshop focused on climate data analysis. Held from April 27 to May 8, 2026, the capacity building program equipped experts to better protect vulnerable agricultural communities across the country. The training was driven by the "Building the Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Agricultural Livelihoods in Southern Zimbabwe Project". This seven-year initiative is implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe alongside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) backed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Recognizing that climate risks span multiple sectors, the workshop brought together specialists from several key government departments: The Meteorological Services Department (MSD), AGRITEX (Agricultural Advisory and Extension Services), The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) and The Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS).



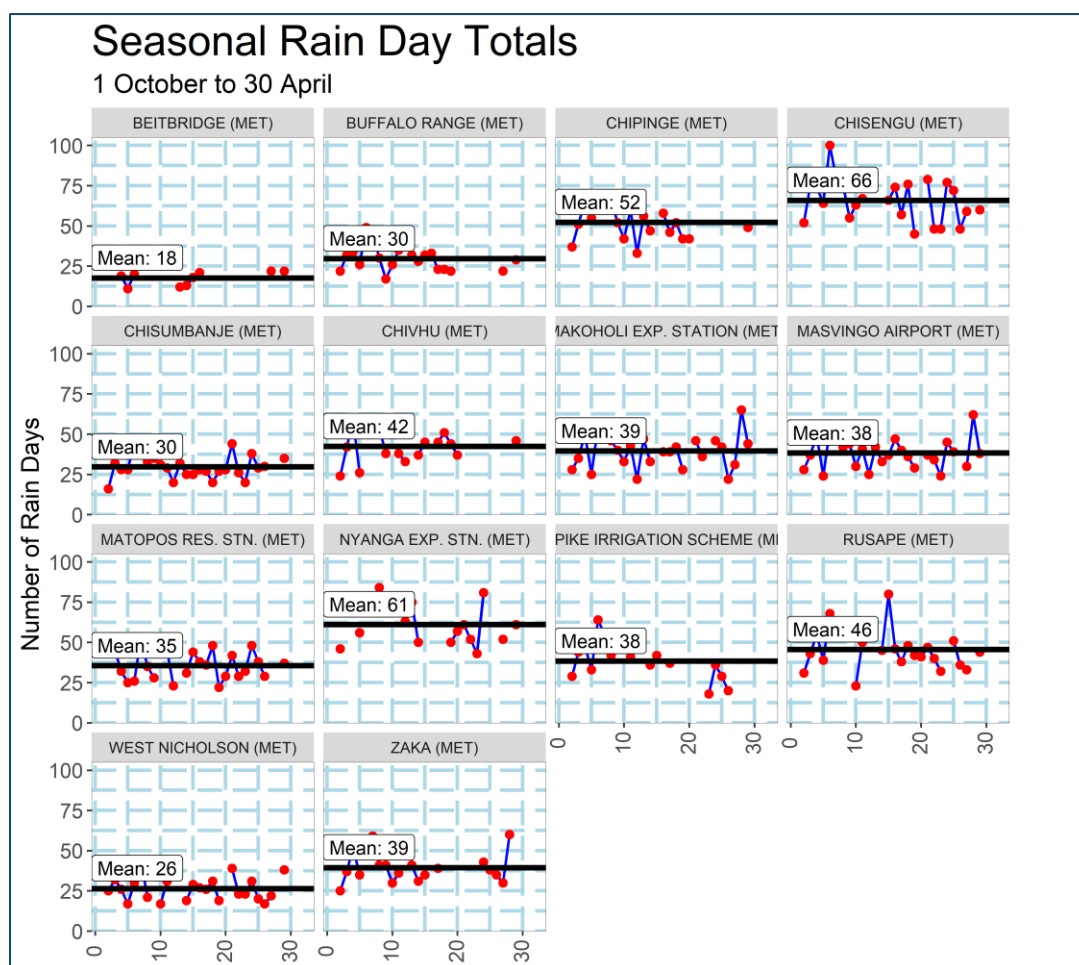
Participants Carrying Out the Hands-on R-Instat exercises During the Training

The core of the workshop was hands on mastery of **R-Instat** and **RStudio**, powerful and highly reliable software tools used worldwide for statistical analysis. Participants learned to build automated, repeatable workflows to analyse extensive rainfall and temperature records. Rather than spending hours writing complex code from scratch, participants learned how to generate customized scripts efficiently, allowing them to focus heavily on data interpretation.

A key highlight of the sessions was learning how to clean and "audit" data to eliminate errors or impossible values before data analysis. To solve long standing coverage gaps in data scarce regions, the teams also successfully incorporated "virtual stations" created through satellite derived rainfall data. Ultimately, this technical milestone lays a powerful foundation for the rollout of Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) digital platforms in Zimbabwe. By arming local extension workers and rural farming communities with accurate, tailored climate bulletins, Zimbabwe is proactively preparing its agricultural sector to handle climate shifts, come rain or shine.

The training empowered teams to design and produce localised climate Information, including:

- **Seasonal Calendars:** Pinpointing precise Start of Season (SOS) and End of Season (EOS) dates to guide optimal crop planting times.
- **Dry Spell Monitoring:** Tracking the frequency and length of dry periods during the growing season.
- **Extreme Event Indicators:** Outlining historical trends in severe rainfall and temperature fluctuations.



Sample Product Showing the Number of Rain Days for a Specific Season

MSD Powered MECW Beats Transport 2-1 in Inter-Ministerial Soccer Warm-Up Match

Praise Govere



Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Environment Lined Up Before a Match

The Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe (MSD) formed the backbone of the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife (MECW) soccer team that edged the Ministry of Transport 2-1 in a friendly match on 13 April at Lois Mt Batten School in Belvedere. The win comes as ministries across Zimbabwe step up preparations for the 2026 Annual Inter-Ministerial Sports Festival, set to be hosted in Matabeleland later this year. Over the years, the MSD Sports Team has been one of the strongest components within the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife contingent. The department regularly provides key players to the wider Ministry squad, which also draws talent from the Environmental Management Agency, Forestry Commission, ZIMPARKS, and Ministry Headquarters.

The Inter-Ministerial Sports Festival brings together teams from all government ministries once a year, rotating through different provinces. Athletes compete across a range of sporting disciplines, turning the event into both a competitive contest and a platform for inter-departmental engagement. For many participants, it is one of the few opportunities in the calendar to interact with colleagues from other ministries outside the formal work environment. Beyond the competition, participation in sports and wellness activities plays an important role in strengthening public institutions. Shared training and matches help build cohesion and morale among staff, breaking down silos and fostering trust that carries over into daily operations. Regular physical activity also supports employee health and mental wellbeing, reducing stress and absenteeism while improving overall productivity.

Sport further cultivates discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities that translate directly into better service delivery. Events like the Inter-Ministerial Festival create informal networks across government, making collaboration on policy and operations easier outside structured meetings. For departments like MSD, strong representation on the field also reinforces a culture of excellence and pride in the institution. With the 2026 festival drawing closer, the 2-1 result against the Ministry of Transport signals that the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife is building momentum. For MSD, it is another demonstration of how technical expertise and team sport can go hand in hand in representing the Ministry with distinction.

SADC Ministers Convened in Masvingo to Strengthen Regional Disaster Resilience

MSD Masvingo, Zimbabwe

The Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe (MSD) played a pivotal role at the Sixth Ordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management, hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe in Masvingo from May 11 to 14, 2026. Director Mrs. R. Manzou led the department's delegation, underscoring Zimbabwe's commitment to regional collaboration on disaster risk reduction and proactive crisis management. Against the backdrop of escalating droughts, floods, and food insecurity across Southern Africa, the summit focused on building long-term resilience under the theme "Building Back Better Together".



Sixth Ordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management [Source - ZBC Online]

The MSD contributed vital meteorological expertise to help shape several major regional breakthroughs during the conference. Key outcomes included the operationalization of the SADC Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the establishment of a harmonized framework for joint rapid assessments to ensure immediate, coordinated emergency responses. Delegates also strengthened deployment procedures for the SADC Standby Force and advanced the SADC Programme on Forced Displacement, Fragility Mitigation, and Climate Resilience.

Crucially, the meeting accelerated the development of regional safety instruments, most notably the SADC Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. This was paired with cross-border frameworks, including a Customs and Border Taxes Instrument and a Health, Quarantine, and One Health Facilitation Framework, ensuring that emergency aid can move smoothly across borders. By driving these initiatives, the MSD has reinforced its vital role in strengthening early warning systems across the SADC region to protect lives and livelihoods.

[#MSDZimbabwe](#) [#SADC](#) [#DisasterRiskReduction](#)

March 2026 Seismic Activity in Zimbabwe

Monalisa Muponda

During May 2026, a total of 61 seismic events were recorded. The events comprised 11 local earthquakes, 44 regional earthquakes, and 6 tele-seismic (distant) events.

Largest Recorded Event

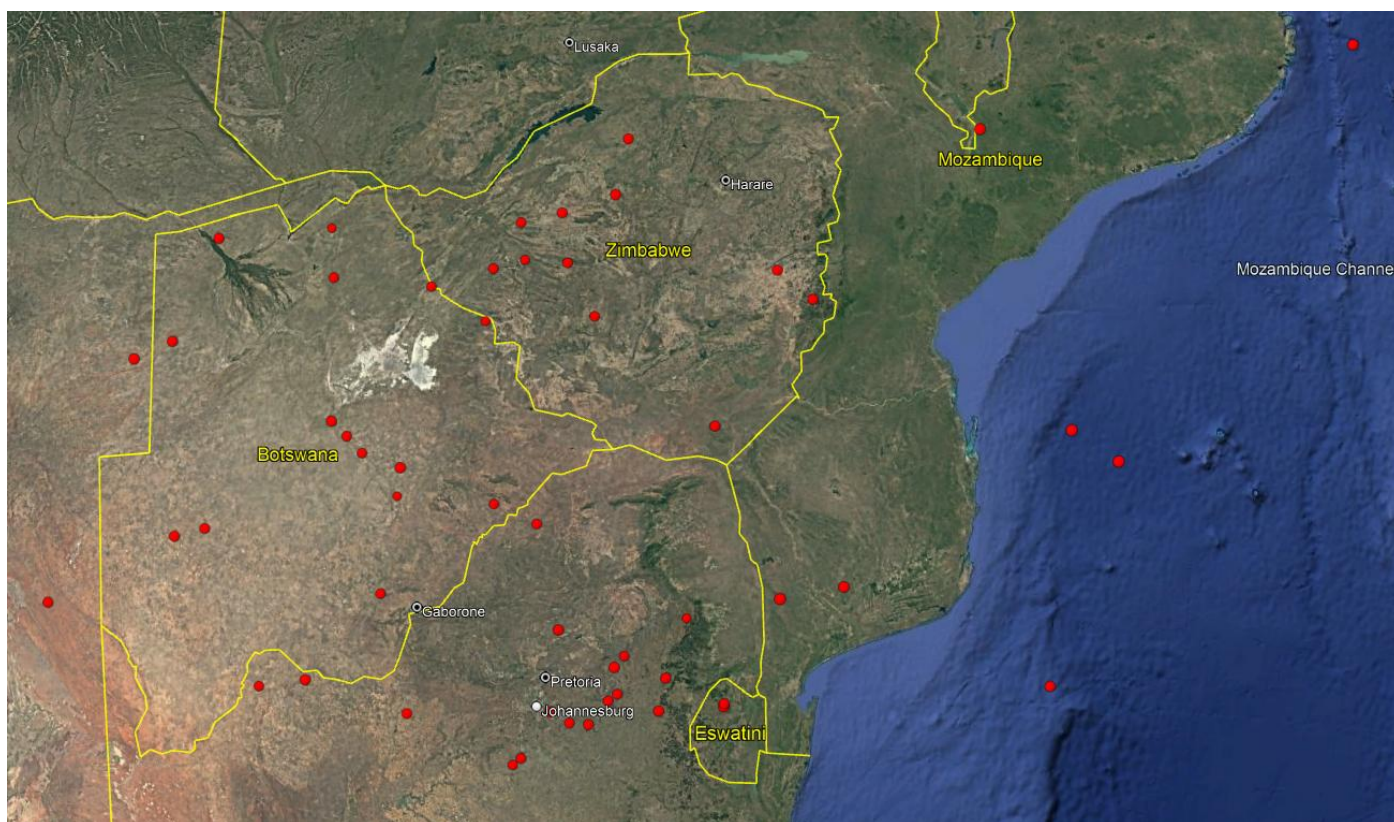
The largest local earthquake recorded during the reporting period had a magnitude of 3.7 ML and occurred in Chimanimani on the 9th of May 2026. Earthquakes in the Chimanimani area are associated with the East African Rift System

Local Seismicity Distribution

Most local seismic events were concentrated in the northwestern part of the country, particularly in Binga and Hwange. Seismic activity in this region is influenced by reservoir induced seismicity associated with Lake Kariba, as well as tectonic activity along the Deka Fault. It remains the most seismically active region in Zimbabwe.

Regional Seismicity

Several earthquakes occurring in neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa and Botswana are interpreted as mining induced seismic events, which commonly occur in regions characterised by extensive deep level mining operations.



Map of events recorded in March 2026 (The epicenters are shown as red solid circles)

Zimbabwe to Host the SADC Cluster Ministerial Meeting on Transport, ICT, and Meteorology

Zimbabwe will co-host the SADC Cluster Meeting of Ministers responsible for Transport, ICT, Information, and Meteorology, scheduled for 22 to 26 June 2026 in Bulawayo. The meeting will bring together regional policymakers to align strategies across critical infrastructure sectors that underpin integration and development within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Held under the theme:

“Liberalised Skies and AI-Enabled Climate Resilient Infrastructure to Accelerate Regional Integration and Sustainable Development in SADC”,

the meeting places emphasis on modernising transport systems, strengthening digital ecosystems, and improving meteorological services through emerging technologies.

Key discussions will focus on the liberalisation of airspace within the region, aimed at improving connectivity, reducing transport costs, and enhancing trade facilitation. Ministers are expected to review progress on aviation cooperation frameworks and identify policy actions that support more efficient regional mobility.

In the ICT sector, attention will be directed toward the development and scaling of Artificial Intelligence-enabled infrastructure and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). These systems are expected to support digital transformation, improve service delivery, and accelerate innovation across member states. The agenda also highlights the role of resilient digital systems in supporting economic integration and governance.

Meteorology will form a critical component of the discussions, with a focus on strengthening climate information services and early warning systems. This aligns with broader regional priorities on climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and adaptation strategies in the face of increasing climate variability.

The meeting will be hosted at the ZITF Grounds Hall 2 in Bulawayo. It is expected to produce policy directions that reinforce regional cooperation, accelerate infrastructure development, and support sustainable economic growth across SADC member states.



Sky Watch: The *Alto cumulus stratiformis*

MSD Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe

These stunning images show a classic patch of **Alto cumulus** clouds specifically the *stratiformis* species. They are middle level clouds that typically sit between 6,500 and 20,000 feet. They are composed of water droplets and sometimes ice crystals that appear as a beautiful, rippled sheet of small, puffy rolls or patches. These clouds form when a large, relatively flat layer of moist air is forced upward by a cooler air mass underneath or by terrain like hills and mountains. As the rising air cools, water vapor condenses into droplets. Weak, localised convective currents occur, then break the cloud sheet into its signature patchy and rippled appearance.

Shot By: Rodgers Hugh Munyira - Chief Matabeleland South



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