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PRESS STATEMENT

Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA)
For Immediate Release

Government's Adoption of the National Formalisation Strategy Signals a New Era for Zimbabwe's Informal Economy

The Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), the national voice representing thousands of informal traders, vendors, transport operators, artisans, cross-border traders, and small-scale producers across Zimbabwe, warmly welcomes the Government's adoption of the **National Formalisation Strategy** together with the **National Employment Policy (2026–2030)**.

This historic policy milestone marks a decisive shift in recognising the informal economy not as a burden to be suppressed, but as a powerful driver of livelihoods, entrepreneurship, employment creation, and national economic growth.

As a key stakeholder that actively participated in the consultations, development, and adoption of the National Formalisation Strategy, ZCIEA commends the Government of Zimbabwe for embracing a progressive and inclusive approach toward economic transformation. In particular, we acknowledge the important public remarks by Presidential Spokesperson Mr George Charamba, whose statements reflected a refreshing and realistic understanding of the role played by the informal economy in Zimbabwe's development trajectory.

For too long, informal economic activity has been misunderstood, marginalised, and in some cases criminalised. The Government's recognition that informality is an economic reality born out of resilience, innovation, and survival is a significant step toward building an inclusive economy that leaves no one behind.

The informal economy remains the backbone of livelihoods for millions of Zimbabweans and continues to sustain communities amid economic challenges. The sector contributes immensely to local commerce, food security, transport systems, manufacturing, and service delivery. Its recognition within national policy frameworks is therefore both timely and necessary.

"The Chamber That Delivers"

For transforming informal economy activities
into mainstream activities

ZCIEA strongly resonates with President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s call for unity, productivity, industrialisation, and shared responsibility in building Zimbabwe’s future. Informal economy workers are not spectators in this national vision—they are active builders of the economy and indispensable partners in achieving Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS-2).

We further welcome the Government’s shift away from outdated perceptions that equated informality with illegality or economic backwardness. As correctly observed, the existence of a formal economy naturally implies the existence of an informal economy. The priority, therefore, must not be exclusion or punishment, but the creation of practical pathways for integration, recognition, decent work, and inclusive growth.

Moving forward, ZCIEA believes that successful formalisation must be grounded in:

- Affordable and simplified registration systems;
- Fair and progressive taxation frameworks;
- Financial Inclusion;
- Access to social protection and financial services;
- Secure and dignified workspaces;
- Inclusive policy dialogue and representation;
- Investment in infrastructure, markets, and productive livelihoods.

Formalisation should not become a tool for over-taxation or exclusion, but rather a pathway toward empowerment, productivity, and economic justice.

ZCIEA remains fully committed to working hand in hand with Government, labour, local authorities, development partners, and other stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the National Formalisation Strategy. We are confident that, if implemented inclusively and transparently, this strategy will unlock transformative opportunities for millions of informal workers through improved market access, business growth, financial inclusion, and enhanced social protection.

Today marks more than a policy announcement—it marks the beginning of a new national conversation that recognises the informal economy as a legitimate, productive, and indispensable pillar of Zimbabwe’s future.

We therefore congratulate the Government of Zimbabwe on this bold and progressive policy direction and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that the informal economy is no longer treated as a shadow economy, but as a recognised engine of innovation, employment, resilience, and national development.

Issued by:

Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA)

Building Dignity, Protection, and Economic Justice for Informal Economy Workers

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