

Zimbabwe: A Profile

The name Zimbabwe is derived from the Shona phrase, *dzimba dzemabwe*, meaning houses of stone or stone buildings which are symbolized by the Great Zimbabwe ruins near the present day town of Masvingo.

Geography and Demography



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the UN.

Zimbabwe is landlocked and situated in southern Africa with a total land area of 390,757 square kilometres. Zimbabwe is bordered by Mozambique to the east, South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west, and Zambia to the north and northwest. The country is divided into 10 administrative provinces and 62 districts. The capital city is Harare and other major cities include Bulawayo, Gweru, Kadoma, Kwekwe, Masvingo and Mutare.

Zimbabwe is home to several UNESCO Natural World Heritage sites such as: (1) the Mana Pools National Park which has over 350 bird species and aquatic wildlife, and wide range of large mammals. The name "Mana" means "four" in the local Shona language which also applies to the four large pools inland from the Zambezi River that are the remnant ox-bow lakes that the Zambezi River carved out thousands of years ago as it changed its course; (2) the Mosi-oa-Tunya (the smoke that thunders) waterfall, also known as Victoria Falls on the Zambezi river); the Great Zimbabwe ruins (the largest collection of ruins in Africa south of the Sahara) located in the heart of southern Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers, they are testament to a culture of great wealth and great architectural skill, built between the 11th and 15th centuries as home to a cattle-herding people who also became adept at metal-working; and (3), the ruined city of Khami (Khame, Kame or Kami) near Bulawayo, the former capital of the Kingdom of Butua of the Torwa dynasty for about 200 years from about 1450.

The population of Zimbabwe is estimated to be 13.061 million (2012 Census) with 52% being female. Two thirds of the population is below the age of 25. The major ethnic groups are Shona and Ndebele.

Economy

Zimbabwe's economy experienced severe challenges over the past decade, reaching crisis proportions in 2007 and 2008. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have contracted by a cumulative 50.3 percent; official inflation peaked at 231 million percent in July 2008; capacity utilization in industry fell below 10 percent by January 2009; poverty remained widespread; infrastructure had deteriorated; the economy had become more informal; and severe food and foreign currency shortages were experienced. The country also faced sanctions from some western countries and the cessation of funding from the Bretton Woods Institutions.

The context showed a significant stabilization and turnaround following the adoption of a multicurrency payments system in February 2009. Other significant macroeconomic contributors to the stabilization and resuscitation include price liberalization, removal of surrender requirements on export proceeds, removal of exchange restrictions, the end of Grain Marketing Board (GMB) monopoly, imposition of budget constraints on Parastatals, and the reform of monetary and fiscal policy frameworks and institutions such as the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ).

Key Statistics for Zimbabwe	
Real GDP growth (2013)	4.5%
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$) (2013)	\$820
Population, total (2012)	13,061,239
Population by sex (2012)	Females - 6,780,700 (51.9%) Males - 6,280,539 (48.1%)
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population) (2013)	72.3%
Life expectancy at birth, total (years) (2012)	58
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above) (2013)	91.3%
External debt US\$ (2013)	\$8.934 Billion

After the July 2013 Harmonized Elections in the country, the new Zanu-PF led Government introduced the 2013-2018 Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation (Zim Asset) as the economic development blueprint and turnaround plan for Zimbabwe's development priorities.

Owing to strong partnership and generous financial assistance by development partners, one of the major positive dividends of the economic stabilization since 2009 was the noticeable improvement of social services delivery across all sectors. However, unpredictable weather conditions, erratic rain patterns and economic restrictions still pose a threat to reverse the gains made thus far. To build on the recent gains and in an effort to mitigate effects of climate change and economic challenges, the government and development partners are now focused on development programs aimed at building resilience and sustainability.