

# Annual Results Report

**2025**

**Zambia**

## Acknowledgements

UNHCR would like to thank all the stakeholders that contributed data and evidence to this report and reviewed their progress against the joint results of the strategy, including forcibly displaced and stateless people, host communities and host governments, United Nations agencies, and international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector. Their contributions enable us to create positive changes in the lives of the people we serve.

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### Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

**Downloaded date:** 08/05/2026

# Table of Contents

## Section 1: Context and Overview

- 1.1 - Changes to the Operational Context
- 1.2 - Progress Against the Desired Impact
- 1.3 - Challenges to Achieving Impacts
- 1.4 - Collaboration and Partnerships

## Section 2: Results

- 2.1 - Outcomes and Achievements
- 2.2 - Age, Gender and Diversity

## Section 3: Resources

- 3.1 - Financial Data
- 3.2 - Resources Overview

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

# Section 1: Context and Overview

## 1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

In 2025, Zambia's operational context continued to evolve positively, with the Government demonstrating strong commitment to advancing refugee protection and solutions through progressive policies that promote inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in national systems. Guided by a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, the country made notable progress in implementing the National Refugee Policy (2023) and the Revised National Resettlement Policy (2024). The launch of the Forced Displacement Survey and the signing of a tripartite agreement between the Zambia Statistics Agency, the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and UNHCR further anchored refugees within national statistics and planning processes ahead of the Ninth National Development Plan. These developments marked a continued shift from parallel humanitarian support toward nationally led, development-oriented responses.

The political and security environment remained stable, preserving protection space. However, the broader macroeconomic situation characterised by high inflation, currency volatility, and fiscal pressures—constrained service delivery and limited socio-economic opportunities in refugee-hosting districts. Continued restrictions on refugee freedom of movement further hindered access to livelihoods and essential services for both refugees and host communities.

By year-end, Zambia hosted 114,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and former refugees, including 5,200 new arrivals in 2025. The population remained predominantly women and children, with most refugees originating from the Democratic Republic of Congo, followed by Burundi, Angola, Rwanda and Somalia. Urban refugee numbers increased modestly, while mixed and onward movements persisted, driven by regional instability and economic disparities. Education, protection and livelihoods remained priority needs across all locations.

These dynamics required UNHCR to balance immediate protection delivery with sustained policy engagement and systems-strengthening efforts. Key areas of focus included legal harmonisation, documentation, and supporting refugee access to national services while advancing inclusion, self-reliance and durable solutions. Despite operational constraints, UNHCR worked closely with Government and partners to maintain protection space and support progress toward nationally anchored solutions.

## 1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

### 1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

**Forcibly displaced and stateless persons in Zambia enjoy improved international protection from strengthened laws, policies, and practices and non-discriminatory and inclusive essential social services and self-reliance opportunities**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70.22%	98.00%
<b>1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27.05%	0.00%

In 2025, the situation of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in Zambia improved, driven by expanded access to documentation, more inclusive national systems, and gradual strengthening of legal and policy safeguards. Access to asylum and registration recovered following the 2024 freeze, resulting in higher individual registration coverage. More than 8,000 individuals, including 1,900 previously unregistered asylum-seekers, were documented, reducing exclusion risks and improving access to protection. Continued engagement with security authorities along northern borders supported more consistent application of asylum procedures in line with international standards.

Legal identity outcomes also advanced. Birth registration for children under five increased from 13% in 2024 to 71% (Forced Displacement Survey) in 2025, reducing risks of statelessness and enabling access to essential services. Expanded issuance of Alien Cards increased the number of refugees holding legally recognised identity documents, thereby strengthening access to financial and public services.

At policy level, progress was made toward a more enabling legal framework. Engagement with Government and partners supported further alignment of national laws with international standards, including strengthened safeguards on non-refoulement and due process. Clarification by the Attorney General confirming refugees' eligibility under the Disability Act marked a significant step toward their inclusion in national disability support systems.

Inclusion in national systems also advanced, with improved access to social protection, health, child protection and livelihoods services through stronger coordination with line ministries. This enabled more equitable access to national GBV and child protection systems for refugees.

Progress was also noted in access to justice, where systemic challenges were more clearly identified. Initial steps including capacity-building for asylum decision-makers, improved coordination, and stronger community feedback mechanisms enhanced access to remedies and accountability, although gaps in legal representation and appeals remain.

These developments reflect a shift towards more inclusive systems and stronger legal safeguards, with measurable improvements in documentation coverage and access to national services, while structural challenges in asylum procedures and access to justice persist.

### 4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

**50% of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities achieve sustainable self-reliance and refugees and former refugees equipped to achieve durable solutions, incl. voluntary repatriation,**

**resettlement or local solutions.**

Indicator		
Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	169	176
<b>4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,228	289
<b>4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17	1
<b>4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed</b>		
Stateless Persons	0	0
<b>4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	5

Notable progress was made toward improved solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people in Zambia through strengthened national systems, enhanced evidence, and expanded access to services. Refugee inclusion advanced under the National Refugee Policy (2023) and Zambia's Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges, integrating refugee needs into national planning frameworks and enabling shared infrastructure investments through the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR).

The Forced Displacement Survey (FDS), implemented with the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), generated Zambia's first nationally comparable dataset across refugees, former refugees and host communities. This strengthened targeting and planning within national systems and supported a shift from assistance dependence toward self-reliance. Findings highlight disparities in service access, including lower access to safe water in settlements (~50%) compared to urban refugees (~81%), while access to primary healthcare remained equitable (87.5% utilization of public services). Primary education enrolment exceeded 80%, though secondary completion remains constrained.

Progress in land administration digitalization under the Office of the Vice President improved tenure security and access to land-related services, supporting sustainable local integration. Building on improved data, efforts expanded access to market-linked livelihood opportunities, contributing to increased income, household resilience, and reduced reliance on assistance.

On durable solutions, 176 individuals voluntarily returned, 289 refugees departed for resettlement, and 1 accessed complementary pathways. In parallel, the Government and UNHCR advanced legal pathways for former refugees, including residency options, laying the groundwork for longer-term legal inclusion.

## Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2025)
<b>2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services</b>			
Zambia	Others of Concern	100.00%	87.50%
Zambia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	91.02%	87.50%
<b>3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education</b>			

Zambia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	69.15%	89.00%
<b>3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education</b>			
Zambia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	28.04%	64.00%

## 1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Progress towards impact remained constrained by weaknesses in the registration and asylum systems and by structural barriers to inclusion. Inconsistent procedures, delayed finalization of standard operating procedures (SOPs), and weak coordination affected the quality and timeliness of registration and refugee status determination (RSD), contributing to documentation delays and increased protection risks.

Fragmented data systems and limited national capacity further constrained inclusion within child protection, gender-based violence (GBV), and social protection systems, while legal and policy reforms progressed slowly due to uneven Government ownership and perceived fiscal implications.

Structural constraints continue to limit self-reliance. Restrictions on freedom of movement and the isolation of settlements reduce access to markets, services, and employment, while high poverty levels in host districts mean progress depends on broader system-wide investment. Limited access to tertiary education, alongside food insecurity, undernutrition, and slow inclusion in national systems such as social protection and health insurance (National Health Insurance Management Authority – NHIMA), further undermines wellbeing and long-term outcomes.

UNHCR and partners will prioritize finalizing and implementing registration and refugee status determination (RSD) standard operating procedures (SOPs), strengthening coordination and data systems, and advancing advocacy and partnerships to ease movement constraints, expand access to higher level education, and accelerate inclusion in national social protection and health insurance systems.

## 1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

In 2025, progress toward inclusion and self-reliance was supported by strengthened collaboration with national and local stakeholders. UNHCR worked closely with the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) as the lead Government counterpart, alongside the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services and the Resettlement Division, to align protection, social protection and settlement planning with national systems. These partnerships were central to advancing implementation of the National Refugee Policy and ensuring refugee considerations were reflected in emerging district development and sectoral plans.

At operational level, UNHCR partnered with Caritas Czech Republic, FAWEZA and Lifeline/Childline Zambia to support livelihoods, education, community-based protection and referral mechanisms. Under the DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan, coordinated efforts ensured timely protection and assistance for new arrivals in line with Zambia's Contingency Plan.

Strategic engagement with development actors strengthened the humanitarian-development nexus. Close collaboration with the World Bank under the IDA20 Window for Host Communities and Refugees aligned investments in infrastructure and livelihoods with protection objectives. Partnerships with UNDP and JICA advanced governance, service-delivery infrastructure and resilience initiatives, while the European Union supported the implementation of the Forced Displacement Survey. The development of Zambia's Agriculture Road Map enhanced engagement with private-sector actors in agribusiness, laying the foundation for market-based approaches and improved value-chain access for refugee-hosting areas.

At district level, continuous engagement through the District Development Coordination Committee promoted refugee inclusion in local planning and coordination. The Ministries of Education and Health provided technical support to strengthen service delivery in Government-run facilities within settlements. UNHCR and COR further built the capacity of District Joint Operations Committees during border monitoring

missions to improve reception and eligibility screening. COR's partnership with the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship improved access to civil documentation, supported by UNICEF-funded initiatives in Kawambwa.

In line with Zambia's ten multisectoral Global Refugee Forum pledges, these efforts reinforced national ownership, expanded development partnerships and contributed to a more coordinated, inclusive response benefiting both refugees and host communities.

## Section 2: Results

### 2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

#### 1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Continued access to territory with quality reception and comprehensive registration-incl birth registration and legal identity documentation- that supports inclusion and self-reliance.

##### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95.53%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority</b>			
Others of Concern	44.97%	50.00%	38.02%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13.25%	50.00%	71.00%
<b>1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials</b>			
Others of Concern	45.00%	100.00%	97.00%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	62.99%	100.00%	98.00%

##### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	8,194
<b>01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	33,440

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

By the end of 2025, Zambia hosted 114,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and former refugees, with registration fully restored across all locations Meheba, Mantapala, Mayukwayukwa and Lusaka. All registration centres were operational, enabling over 8,000 individuals to be newly registered and documented during the year, significantly strengthening access to protection and essential services.

Following the introduction of new procedures requiring screening by District Joint Operations Committees (DJOCs) at designated entry points, UNHCR supported COR in conducting a large-scale profiling exercise of undocumented asylum-seekers in Lusaka. A total of 1,960 individuals were profiled, after which the Department of Immigration issued Report Orders directing them to present at official entry points for formal registration. UNHCR also facilitated the safe relocation of 50 highly vulnerable individuals from Lusaka to refugee settlements. Progress toward formalization of national procedures advanced, with the Registration

Standard Operating Procedure reaching its final revision stage a major milestone toward standardizing practices nationwide. Once endorsed, UNHCR will support COR in rolling out comprehensive training on registration, data protection and use of digital tools to enhance data quality and strengthen legal identity outcomes.

Mobile registration missions in Copperbelt Province enabled the verification and re-documentation of refugees and asylum-seekers with expired, lost or damaged documents. These missions also served as an opportunity to raise awareness among refugees and local authorities including Provincial and District Joint Operations Committees on refugee rights, entitlements and available services.

To reinforce protection at entry points, UNHCR and COR conducted border-monitoring missions to Luapula and Northern provinces. These missions strengthened the capacity of PJOCs, DJOCs, District Commissioners and law enforcement officials to apply asylum procedures in line with refugee and human rights principles, improving reception and eligibility screening.

Significant progress was achieved in civil registration. Through mobile registration activities implemented with COR and the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship (DNRPC), 1,952 refugee children received birth certificates in 2025. As a result, birth registration coverage increased to 71%, up from 13% in 2024, according to the Forced Displacement Survey. The FDS further revealed that 71% of refugee children had their births registered, compared with 27% of host-community children and 38% of former refugees, against a national average of 14%.

Through the same collaboration with COR and DNRPC, 1,834 Alien Cards were issued to refugees and former refugees in 2025. According to the FDS, 98% of refugees and asylum-seekers and 97% of former refugees now possess legally recognised identity documents marking a substantial improvement in legal identity coverage

## 2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

**Zambia provides non-discriminatory access to a fair, efficient, and adaptable asylum procedure, (characterized by integrity and full access to legal remedies, with all processes well-documented in proGres v4).**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	49.00	30.00	263.00
<b>2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70.22%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	85.00%	100.00%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, progress toward strengthening Zambia's asylum and refugee status determination (RSD) system was influenced by renewed institutional leadership and efforts to respond to a growing caseload of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The appointment of a new Commissioner restored continuity after a prolonged leadership gap and enabled operational adjustments, including redeploying RSD staff from Lusaka to Mantapala and Meheba to support the transition toward settlement-based, point-of-entry registration. Although the national backlog increased to 12,910 pending cases by year-end reflecting new arrivals and delayed processing these staffing changes are expected to enhance adjudication capacity in 2026.

The Refugee Status Determination Committee (RSDC) held 11 sessions in Lusaka and conducted two missions to settlements, fewer than originally planned which limited the number of first-instance decisions issued, but maintained essential processing functions. Average processing time from registration to first-instance decision was 263 days, though this figure masked wide variation, with some cases pending from previous years and others completed within days.

Throughout the year, UNHCR continued to strengthen national capacity through targeted technical support. A training needs assessment highlighted critical gaps in determining identity particularly in cases involving misrepresentation of Rwandan nationals posing as Congolese. In response, UNHCR delivered a focused workshop that strengthened the capacity of 11 legal advisors to analyse complex claims and improve decision quality.

Around mid-year, COR revised its approach toward asylum-seekers raising SOGI claims. UNHCR conducted RSD mandate for those cases. These developments reflect ongoing efforts to stabilise and strengthen Zambia's asylum and RSD system, while highlighting the need for sustained investment in procedural harmonisation, national capacity-building, and safeguards to ensure fairness and consistency in access to protection.

### 3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

**By the end of 2028, the Government of Zambia adopted, amended, and aligned all relevant domestic laws pertaining to forcibly displaced and stateless individuals in line with international standards, thereby facilitating the implementation of comprehensive policies and action plans**

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol</b>			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Progressing toward alignment
<b>3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</b>			
None	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment

## Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Stateless Persons	Yes

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

While formal legislative alignment has not yet been completed, UNHCR's technical engagement with the Government, the World Bank, civil society, and oversight institutions contributed to policy dialogue, improved legal interpretation in specific sectors, and clearer reform pathways benefiting forcibly displaced and stateless persons. In 2025, steps were taken towards aligning domestic legislation affecting refugees, asylum-seekers, former refugees, and stateless persons with international standards and the 2024 National Refugee Policy.

The USD 30 million World Bank-financed Zambia Refugee and Host Communities Project commenced implementation, including Component 1.2 on legal reform. UNHCR joined the Policy Stakeholders Group convened by the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) and the Zambia Law Development Commission and provided a detailed legal mapping identifying provisions requiring amendment to align sectoral laws with the Refugees Act (2017) and the National Refugee Policy. UNHCR also submitted technical comments on the Immigration and Deportation Act to clarify the distinction between refugees and asylum-seekers and irregular migrants, strengthen non-refoulement and due process safeguards, reduce barriers to work and study, and support clearer pathways to residence and citizenship. Formal legislative amendments have not yet been adopted.

Despite limited statutory reform, some positive interpretative developments were observed. Following UNHCR engagement, the Attorney General confirmed that the Disability Act No. 6 of 2012 may be interpreted to include refugees, enabling their registration and access to services. In practice, refugee children continued to access secondary education, although this inclusion is not yet consistently reflected in law.

UNHCR provided targeted support to a constitutional petition before the Constitutional Court concerning citizenship provisions affecting refugees and former refugees. Through participation in consultations convened by the Solicitor General and COR, UNHCR contributed comparative international standards and technical input on durable solutions and pathways to citizenship. Judgment remains pending.

UNHCR also engaged in policy alignment processes. Submissions on the draft National Social Protection Policy and Implementation Plan sought the explicit inclusion of asylum-seekers, refugees, former refugees, and stateless persons within national systems. While the approved 2025 Policy retained broad human rights language, it does not yet explicitly reference these groups. Similarly, UNHCR provided detailed comments on the draft National Child Policy to strengthen non-discrimination, safeguards against statelessness (including birth registration), protection of trafficked and asylum-seeking children, and the prohibition of immigration detention of children. The revised draft is pending.

In late 2025, UNHCR partnered with FAWEZA to advance evidence-based advocacy on tertiary education access. Engagement with Members of Parliament and relevant ministries generated concrete commitments to address barriers to skills training, student financing, and qualification recognition for refugees.

## 6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

**By the end of 2028, Zambia has strengthened legal and social frameworks that ensure forcibly displaced and stateless persons are protected from detention based on legal status, have increased access to GBV services and legal remedies, and receive inclusive child protection and psychosocial support.**

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,157

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Through collaboration with UNICEF and MCDSS, refugee and asylum-seeking children were increasingly integrated into national child protection systems. National case management tools and SOPs were revised to explicitly include displaced children, including updates to the Best Interests Determination (BID) form and documentation standards. Technical inputs to the National Child Policy strengthened non-discrimination provisions and birth registration safeguards, reinforcing equal protection within national frameworks.

In 2025, some 410 GBV incidents were reported (489 in 2024). While reduced reporting may reflect prevention gains, access to survivor-centred services remained functional through established multi-sectoral referral pathways. Survivors accessed shelter, psychosocial and clinical services through Government systems, with UNHCR and partners supporting coordination and case management. Continued reporting of emotional, physical and economic violence reflects improved awareness and identification mechanisms.

Detention monitoring continued amid 271 recorded cases involving asylum-seekers, refugees and former refugees, primarily linked to mobility restrictions and documentation issues. Some detentions reflected limited awareness of legal status among enforcement actors. Deployment of Immigration Liaison Officers to COR strengthened coordination with the Immigration Department, contributing to more timely resolution of unjustified detentions and mitigating protection risks.

Access to legal remedies strengthened through a jointly organised national dialogue that identified systemic barriers, including limited knowledge of refugee law and weak referral pathways. Agreed priority actions focus on institutional coordination, integration of refugee law into national training platforms and improved access to legal information, contributing to more predictable protection pathways for displaced populations.

## 7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

**Community engagement and empowerment mechanisms strengthened to facilitate forcibly displaced persons and their host communities to be less dependent on aid and more resilient to shocks**

## Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Extensive	Extensive	Extensive
<b>7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms</b>			
Others of Concern	100.00%	100.00%	15.00%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	15.00%
<b>7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	31.09%	50.00%	37.93%

## Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,570
<b>07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback &amp; response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	16,790
<b>07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95,157

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, community engagement and accountability mechanisms were strengthened across all refugee-hosting locations, contributing to more resilient and self-reliant forcibly displaced and stateless people and host communities. Refugee community elections were completed nationwide, with women holding 37% of leadership positions, reinforcing inclusive governance and representation.

Feedback and response systems remained functional and increasingly utilized. A total of 1,215 feedback cases were formally recorded and processed, while broader engagement channels registered 16,790 reports from refugees and asylum-seekers (15% engagement rate). Engagement among former refugees remained significantly lower (0.74%, 135 reports), highlighting continued need for adapted outreach. These trends informed targeted adjustments to communication strategies for 2026.

Mapping of 13 Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) and feedback mechanisms confirmed that community committees remain the most trusted accountability channel, despite growing use of digital platforms. To expand youth participation and information access, refugee youth in Mayukwayukwa produced community reporting content reaching over 200,000 views, strengthening peer-to-peer communication and awareness of services.

Partnerships with Government and civil society reinforced social and economic resilience. The Ministry of Agriculture registered refugee farmers under the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), supporting livelihood diversification. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) facilitated integration initiatives, including language classes for women and use of Community Welfare Assistance Committees for social assistance referrals. Through the Forum for African Women Educationalists of

Zambia (FAWEZA) and RLO partners, community consultations informed education advocacy, while the Mantapala skills centre recorded 59.3% female participation.

Integrity and safeguarding systems were strengthened through nationwide community consultations on fraud and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), informing targeted awareness materials. Collaboration with Lifeline Childline Zambia enhanced standardized, age, gender and diversity (AGD)-sensitive messaging and referral pathways for gender-based violence and cash-based interventions. The Government of Zambia, particularly COR and MCDSS, remained central in facilitating inclusive community governance structures and strengthening linkages between refugee and national systems.

## 8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

### New arrivals and targeted vulnerable persons have access to basic needs and essential services

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	43.84%	30.00%	18.37%

#### Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
<b>08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12,997
<b>08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7,040

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Through close collaboration between the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), UNHCR, and financial service partners, progress was made toward extending refugee inclusion within Zambia's social protection landscape. With UNHCR support, 2,598 vulnerable refugee households accessed multipurpose cash assistance aligned with the structure and value of the national Social Cash Transfer. This harmonized approach strengthened coherence with Government systems, enabled households to meet essential needs, reduced reliance on negative coping strategies, and contributed to more predictable and equitable support alongside Zambian households. The consistently high rate of successful transfers reflected effective coordination among Government, UNHCR, and service providers.

In parallel, refugees and asylum-seekers received essential non-food items through coordinated efforts involving COR, district authorities, community structures, and humanitarian partners. These mechanisms helped ensure that assistance reached the most vulnerable households. With support from UNFPA, 711 school-going children received reusable sanitary pads and hygiene supplies, improving menstrual hygiene management and supporting girls' continued attendance and participation in school.

Across all assistance modalities, collaboration among Government institutions, UNHCR, and partners ensured that support was delivered through protection-sensitive and accountable systems that upheld dignity and promoted inclusion. UNHCR provided coordination and technical oversight, including monitoring of NFI distributions to ensure compliance with protection standards, accountability to affected populations, and age, gender, and diversity principles. COR and partners, working closely with community structures, supported beneficiary identification, community mobilization, NFI distribution, and post-distribution monitoring.

### 13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

**Forcibly displaced persons have equal access to economic rights for sustainable income supported by local development schemes**

#### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,289

#### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Zambia’s inclusion agenda advanced from evidence to implementation, delivering results across data, livelihoods, land governance and basic services. The Forced Displacement Survey (FDS), implemented by ZamStats with UNHCR support, generated comparable data across refugees, former refugees and host communities, enabling improved targeting and planning within district systems. Complementary food security and vulnerability analyses informed 2026 prioritization and supported a shift from assistance toward self-reliance.

On the ground, UNHCR and partners supported market-linked livelihoods, agriculture, cooperatives and small enterprise development, reaching 3,275 refugees, former refugees and host communities and strengthening income and resilience. In land governance, the Division of Resettlement, with UNHCR technical support, advanced a digital land information system, with initial rollout in Mayukwayukwa capturing 50 households and improving tenure security and access to land-related services.

Access to basic services improved through rehabilitation of 68 water points across refugee-hosting areas, increasing reliable access to safe water, although sanitation—particularly in schools remains insufficient and requires further investment.

With World Bank financing under the International Development Association Window for Host Communities and Refugees (USD 30 million), the Government advanced shared infrastructure and livelihoods. Progress was strongest in enabling infrastructure, including electrification in Meheba expected to reach up to 20,000 people. Other sectors, including transport, education and health, are expected to accelerate following completion of key assessments, with implementation scaling up in 2026.

Overall, these interventions strengthened inclusion within national systems and contributed to improved self-reliance outcomes for displaced and host communities.

### 14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

**UNHCR collaborates with partners to support voluntary and dignified return for all refugees expressing a desire to return.**

## Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,104

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The Operation supported the voluntary repatriation of 177 refugees, including 176 individuals returning to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and 1 individual to Mozambique. To ensure that individuals considering return had access to accurate and timely information, the operation reached approximately 2,799 refugees and asylum-seekers through community consultations, townhall discussions, help desks, and digital information sessions. These engagements strengthened informed decision-making by providing up-to-date insights on conditions in countries of origin.

The voluntary return process was carried out in close collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), reinforcing national leadership and ensuring protection safeguards were maintained throughout. Each returnee household received cash assistance totalling \$20, helping address immediate needs meant for procurement of luggage bags and food during Travel.

## 15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

**The efficiency and scope of resettlement for forcibly displaced persons are substantially improved, with higher numbers of admissions through complementary pathways.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	849	200	104
<b>15.3 Number of people admitted through complementary pathways from the host country</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17	20	1

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, in total, 104 individuals were submitted for resettlement. 32 cases of 75 individuals were submitted to Canada under the allocated quota of 70 individuals. Another 6 cases of 9 individuals were submitted to the Unallocated Global Quota (UGQ); 3 cases of 3 individuals were submitted to Canada under the Urgent Protection Program (UPP), and 2 cases of 5 individuals were submitted under the Human Rights Defenders (HRD) program to Canada. 1 case of 1 individual was submitted under the UGQ to Norway. 1 case of 1 individual was submitted on Emergency priority to Australia. Another 10 individuals were add-ons to submissions, mainly new babies or add-on spouses. Total Submissions included individuals from Afghanistan, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Progress on Complementary Pathways remained limited, with one Burundian refugee departing to France to pursue postgraduate studies under the UNIV’R master’s scholarship programme. While small in scale, this departure demonstrates the potential of education pathways to expand protection and long-term opportunities for refugees.

Together, these efforts contributed to strengthening access to international protection solutions for refugees with heightened protection needs.

## 16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

**By the end of 2028, forcibly displaced persons and host communities show marked improvements in self-reliance and integration, evidenced by socio-economic resilience, long-term legal status, secure housing, access to the full cycle of education, primary healthcare, and inclusion in national social protection.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	23.89%	23.00%	1.74%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people</b>	
Others of Concern	Limited
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Limited
Stateless Persons	Limited

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The 2025 Forced Displacement Survey (FDS) demonstrated that refugees and asylum-seekers in Zambia

are broadly included in national health and foundational education systems, although gaps remain in secondary and tertiary education, social protection coverage, and legal pathways. In health, refugees accessed services on par with nationals, with 58.37% of births attended by skilled personnel and 18.84% of children receiving measles vaccination. These outcomes were supported by Government-led service delivery, UNHCR's efforts to harmonize referral practices and strengthen national coordination, and enhanced community-level HIV joint workplan development following a government-endorsed action plan. A tripartite MoU between the Government of Zambia and China on health outreach programmes is under finalization.

Education results reflect strong foundational inclusion, with early childhood participation among refugees reaching 69%, primary enrolment remaining between 80–90%, and completion generally exceeding 60%. Approximately 76% of refugees report having received some education. However, progression beyond primary level remains limited. Secondary completion declines to 30–50% at lower secondary and below 25% at upper secondary, while tertiary access remains extremely low due to high costs (e.g. school supplies, materials, transport...), administrative barriers, and ineligibility for Government loans and bursaries. These challenges mirror broader socio-economic constraints across rural settings. UNHCR's evidence generation and advocacy highlighted these barriers, while the Ministry of Education maintained non-discriminatory policies supporting access at foundational levels.

Access to basic services shows progress but remains uneven. Settlement-based refugees generally meet SPHERE standards and benefit from earlier investments by securing more than 20 litres of water per person per day. However, FDS data indicate that 81% of urban refugees have access to basic drinking water compared with 50% in settlements. Sanitation coverage among refugees remains relatively strong at 86%, although school WASH facilities require further investment to keep pace with enrolment. District water authorities, community structures, operational partners, and UNHCR collectively sustained services and identified remaining gaps.

The most significant inclusion gap remains access to national social protection. While some refugee households reported receiving social benefits, the FDS confirms that this largely reflects humanitarian assistance rather than inclusion in statutory Government schemes. Zambia's non-contributory programmes remain limited to citizens, and although refugees may theoretically access contributory schemes, most are engaged in informal sectors. UNHCR's engagement with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, alongside UN partners and World Bank support to the Social Registry, provides a pathway for future inclusion, contingent on integrating refugee data into Government systems.

Legal integration remained a priority given the protracted nature of displacement. UNHCR and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees advanced a joint strategy to strengthen documentation and regularization efforts, including renewed engagement with Angolan authorities and preparatory work toward a 2026 roadmap. UNHCR also provided technical support to the Zambia Civil Liberties Association in a Constitutional Court petition relating to refugees' eligibility for citizenship, contributing to clarification of rights and efforts to reduce statelessness risks. Together, these efforts by the Government of Zambia, supported by UNHCR and partners, advanced inclusion and protection outcomes across refugee-hosting areas.

## Other Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Baseline	Target(2025)	Actual(2025)
<b>4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services</b>			
Others of Concern	100.00%	100.00%	74.70%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	33.89%	100.00%	74.70%
<b>4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	90.00%	58.00%
<b>4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services</b>			
Others of Concern	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9.93%	82.00%	100.00%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	54.20%	50.00%	100.00%
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29.65%	90.00%	18.84%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97.31%	80.00%	58.37%
11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3.30%	4.00%	2.00%
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	54.80%	78.00%	52.95%
12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	66.00%

### Other Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Actual (2025)
04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,400
05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12,673
10.1.1 Number of individual consultations in UNHCR supported health care services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97,554
10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	25,305
11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9,810
12.1.1 Number of people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	75,474

## 2.2. Age, Gender

The operation strengthened the application of the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach to ensure that forcibly displaced and stateless persons could participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives and access services equitably. AGD considerations were integrated into routine monitoring and community engagement, using age- and sex-disaggregated information and regular consultations with diverse groups across settlements and urban areas. Feedback and complaints were enhanced through strengthened helpdesks, hotlines, suggestion boxes, townhalls and focus group discussions, enhancing accountability to affected populations and enabling timely responses to protection concerns. Participation and inclusion improved where community structures reflected diverse representation, including

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Participation and inclusion improved where community structures reflected diverse representation, including women, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. Women's leadership and economic participation were supported through the formalisation of a women-led group in Mantapala, enabling them to expand income-generating activities. Disability inclusion advanced through collaboration with national systems, including support for disability ID registration and the establishment of a special education unit in a refugee-hosting school. Mobility aids were provided in Meheba to individuals with physical disabilities, reducing barriers to mobility and participation. LGBTQI+ persons facing protection risks or administrative barriers received targeted assistance, including cash support and temporary accommodation, to ensure safety and continuity of services.

Progress, however, was affected by global funding pressures, fluctuating budgets and staffing reductions, which slowed implementation and limited the scale of tailored support. Persistent barriers such as secondary education constraints, uneven access to specialised disability services and ongoing challenges for SOGIESC individuals—highlighted the need for continued investment in inclusive systems and flexible case management.

Despite these constraints, UNHCR maintained strong AGD leadership, reinforcing equitable participation, improving inclusion in service access and strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure that diverse protection needs continued to be identified and addressed appropriately.

## Section 3: Resources

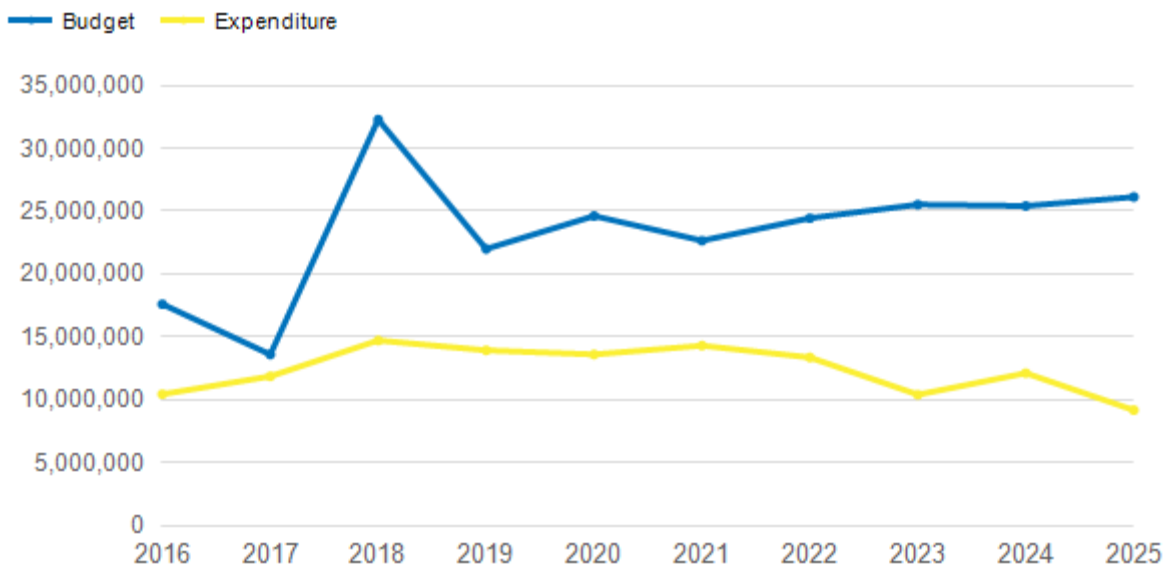
### 3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

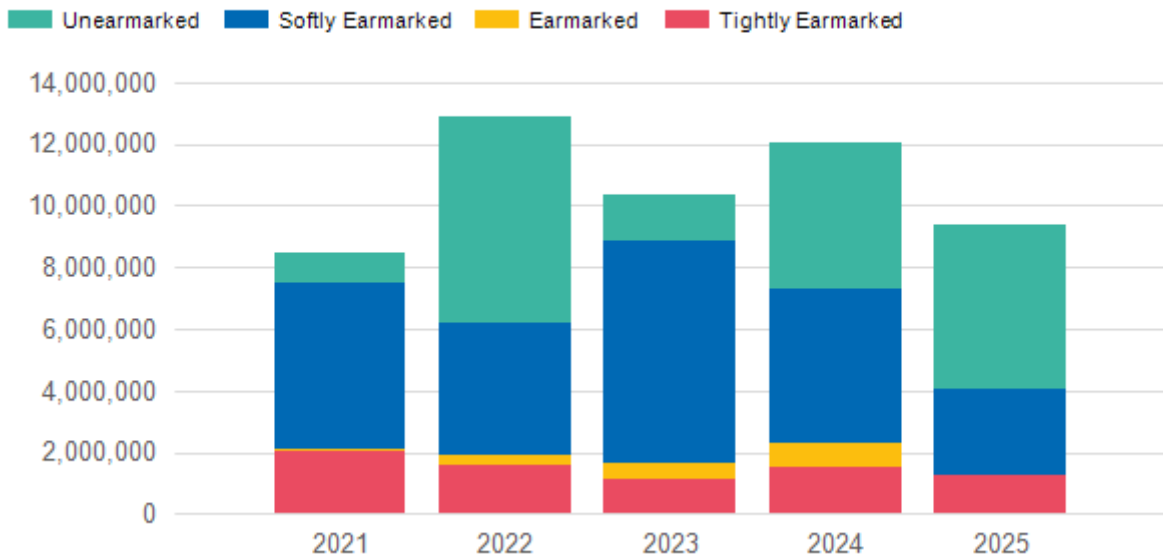
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	12,208,555	4,707,044	38.56%	4,707,044	100.00%
IA4: Solve	13,917,595	4,481,289	32.20%	4,481,289	100.00%
All Impact Areas		40,000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,126,150</b>	<b>9,228,334</b>	<b>35.32%</b>	<b>9,188,334</b>	<b>99.57%</b>

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	3,222,299	1,816,561	56.37%	1,816,561	100.00%
OA2: Status	1,712,964	699,476	40.83%	699,476	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	1,919,774	330,761	17.23%	330,761	100.00%
OA6: Justice	893,958	397,115	44.42%	397,115	100.00%
OA7: Community	2,632,571	382,356	14.52%	382,356	100.00%
OA8: Wellbeing	1,826,988	1,080,775	59.16%	1,080,775	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	4,721,292	711,821	15.08%	711,821	100.00%
OA14: Return	938,440	216,733	23.10%	216,733	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	1,432,576	93,541	6.53%	93,541	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	6,825,288	3,459,194	50.68%	3,459,194	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		40,000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,126,150</b>	<b>9,228,334</b>	<b>35.32%</b>	<b>9,188,334</b>	<b>99.57%</b>

### Budget and Expenditure Trend



### Contributions Trend by Type



## 3.2. Resources Overview

In 2025 UNHCR Zambia budget requirement was \$ 9.7 million, but reduced contributions early in the year significantly weakened the financial outlook. With only 26% of requirements funded through public sector financing, the operation faced a substantial budget gap that required immediate reprioritization and a leaner operational footprint. Limited resources necessitated concentrating funding on core protection, asylum processes and life-saving interventions. As a result, several planned activities including community-based protection programming, livelihoods and socio-economic initiatives, and expanded registration services such as mobile registration—were scaled back or postponed. Partner coverage, particularly in remote locations, was also reduced. Planned investments in inclusion and resilience work could not be advanced

as the operation focused on safeguarding essential frontline services.

Throughout the year, the operation prioritised continuity of critical protection functions despite tightening financial ceilings. Preserving targeted registration and documentation services, Gender Based Violence and child protection responses, and essential field presence required strict sequencing of activities. Resource constraints limited the operation's ability to sustain broader community engagement platforms and slowed mid-term systems-strengthening support to Government counterparts. The funding shortfall also constrained support to case management for vulnerable households, including restricted implementation for cash-based assistance to new arrivals and support to extremely vulnerable individuals .

Targeted and flexible contributions helped mitigate some of these challenges. Support received through the Arab Bank for Development in Africa, Japan, China, UNAIDS, EU–UNICEF, PRM, UBRAF and the Denmark Ministry of Foreign Affairs enabled continuity of priority protection activities, reinforced GBV and child protection interventions, supported evidence-generation efforts and sustained limited resilience-building initiatives for women and youth. These contributions provided critical relief at key moments, helping maintain essential services; however, they were insufficient to fully offset the broader budget gap.

Transition processes related to the shift towards a Multi-Country Office model further affected late year absorption capacity, resulting in a modest carry-over into 2026. The 2025 experience highlighted structural vulnerabilities linked to short-term and unpredictable funding flows. Looking ahead, predictable, multi-year and flexible financing will be central to sustaining protection delivery, strengthening national systems, and advancing inclusion and solutions pathways for refugees and host communities in Zambia

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

### 4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

The Zambia Multi Country Office conducted a Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR) with participation from the Multi-Functional Team (MFT) to review progress and inform forward planning drawing on evidence from participatory assessments, routine monitoring, partner reports, and sector-specific trend analysis. As 2026 is an interim bridging year, the operation will use this period to refine priorities and prepare for a full multi-stakeholder process that will shape and guide the 2027–2030 Multi-Year Strategy and strengthen delivery during 2026.

The Multi-Country Office (MCO) operated under significant fiscal and organizational strain, exacerbated by the global funding crisis, austerity measures, and an expenditure freeze that disrupted implementation and created uncertainty among partners. Despite these challenges, the operation safeguarded core and essential functions and priorities including access to territory and maintained social cohesion in hosting areas, advanced statistical inclusion, and deepened government-led delivery pathways. Looking ahead to the new Multi-Year Strategy (MYS 2027–2030), the MCO will prioritize a lean, risk-aware, government-led approach centred on the core pillars of enhancing the protection space and finding sustainable solutions to displacement challenges, while leveraging national systems, development financing, and regional diplomacy to sustain asylum space and expand integrated services.

The Zambia MCO strategic review identified several priorities to guide the 2027–2030 Multi-Year Strategy and strengthen delivery during 2026. A central recommendation is to advance refugee protection and legal inclusion through a sequenced, politically informed advocacy approach, focusing first on sectoral policies such as social protection, disability, and agriculture where refugees are not explicitly excluded. At the regional level, increased engagement with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) will be important to reinforce asylum norms and counter rising securitization trends.

To promote self-reliance, the MCO will pursue incremental improvements in freedom of movement wherever politically feasible, while also strengthening area-based economic models that do not depend on major policy reform. Settlement development planning, value chain integration, and private sector partnerships will be central to positioning refugee hosting areas as viable economic hubs aligned with national development priorities.

Strengthening government-led delivery through a whole of government approach that will require institutionalized coordination mechanisms, targeted capacity support to frontline officials, and systematic inclusion of refugees in national development plans and UN cooperation frameworks, will be prioritized. Parallel to this, data and evidence systems must be consolidated by embedding refugee indicators in national surveys and administrative systems and generating priority analysis on economic contributions and fiscal impacts to inform development financing.



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