

# Zambia



## KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth:	1964
Population:	12,935,000 (2009)
GDP p.c. growth:	0.3% p.a. 1990–2009
UN HDI 2010:	world ranking 150
Official language:	English
Time:	GMT plus 2hr
Currency:	kwacha (ZK)

## Geography

Area:	752,614 sq km
Coastline:	none
Capital:	Lusaka

Zambia is a landlocked, fertile and mineral-rich country on the Southern African plateau. It is bordered by: (clockwise from the north) the United Republic of Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia (via the Caprivi Strip), Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The country comprises nine provinces (from south to north): Southern, Western, Lusaka, Central, Eastern, North-Western, Copperbelt, Northern and Luapula.

**Main towns:** Lusaka (capital, pop. 1.42m in 2009), Kitwe (Copperbelt Province, 508,700), Ndola (Copperbelt, 482,300), Kabwe (Central, 211,500), Chingola (Copperbelt, 175,100), Mufulira (Copperbelt, 139,400), Luanshya (Copperbelt, 130,700), Livingstone (Southern, 130,200), Kasama (Northern, 107,400), Chipata (Eastern, 105,400), Kalulushi (Copperbelt, 94,500), Mazabuka (Southern, 89,400), Chililabombwe (Copperbelt, 70,100), Mongu (Western, 66,400), Choma (Southern, 57,100), Kapiri Mposhi (Central, 52,900), Kansanshi (North-Western, 50,000), Kafue (Lusaka, 47,800), Mansa (Luapula, 44,600), Monze (Southern, 39,000), Sesheke (Western, 30,700) and Mpika (Northern, 30,600).

**Topography:** Most of Zambia is high plateau, deeply entrenched by the Zambezi river (and its tributaries, the Kafue and Luangwa) and the Luapula river. The Zambezi flows to the south, turning eastwards to make the border with Zimbabwe. In the north are three great lakes: the Tanganyika, Mweru and Bangweulu. The man-made Lake Kariba stretches along the southern border. The Mafinga Mountains form part of a great escarpment running down the east side of the Luangwa river valley. The country rises to a higher plateau in the east.

**Climate:** Tropical, but seldom unpleasantly hot, except in the valleys. There are three seasons: a cool dry season April–August; a

## did you know?

The Commonwealth Youth Programme's Africa Centre is based in Lusaka.

Kalusha Bwalya, born in Mufulira in 1963, was African Footballer of the Year in 1988, and Clifford Mulenga, born in Kitwe in 1987, won the Confederation of African Football Young Player of the Year award in 2007.

Zambia is one of seven landlocked Commonwealth countries, all of which are in Africa.

hot dry season August–November; and a wet season, which is even hotter, November–April. Frost occurs in some areas in the cool season. Rainfall is 508–1,270mm p.a.

**Environment:** The most significant environmental issues are: deforestation, soil erosion, and desertification; health risk posed by inadequate water treatment facilities; threat to big game populations by poaching; and air pollution and resulting acid rain in the areas surrounding mining and refining operations in Copperbelt Province.

**Vegetation:** Forest – mostly savannah bushveld – covers 56% of the land area, having declined at 1.0% p.a. 2000–07. The high eastern plateau consists of open grassy plains with small trees and some marshland. Arable land comprises 7% of the total land area.

**Wildlife:** Zambia has a wealth of wildlife, including big mammals and numerous species of antelopes. There are 19 national parks and 34 game management areas, about one-third of the country's area. South Luangwa has one of Africa's largest elephant populations. Kafue National Park has the largest number of antelope species of any African park, including the rare red lechwe, an aquatic antelope. It is also a home of the fish eagle, Zambia's national emblem. Decline in animal numbers has been slowed by

the government's commitment to wildlife conservation, and the enforcement of measures against poaching and weapon-carrying in the conservation areas. There are 233 mammal species, of which 12 are thought to be endangered.

**Transport:** There are 91,440km of roads, 22% paved, and 1,273km of railway (not including the Tazara Railway). Roads can be hazardous during the rainy season. There is access to the Mozambican port of Beira (also to Maputo) via Livingstone and the Zimbabwe railway system; to the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam, via the Tazara Railway; and to Durban in South Africa, also via Livingstone and the Zimbabwe railway system. In 2003 a South African consortium was granted a 20-year licence to manage Zambia Railways.

The western route to the sea, the Benguela Railway (through the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Angolan port of Benguela) was closed in 1975 due to upheavals in the Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire) and Angola. However, by 2007 restoration of the route was in progress following a grant, of up to US\$300m, received by Angola from China. Since 2000, plans have been under way for a new rail route from Lusaka to Blantyre in Malawi, giving access to the port of Nacala in Mozambique.



## History

Archaeological findings at Kabwe indicate that Zambia was inhabited around 10,000 BC. More complete records date from the arrival of the Luba and Lunda peoples during the 14th to 15th century, from what are now the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola. The Bemba are descendants of the Luba and the Lozi of the Lunda. The Ngoni peoples came north from South Africa to eastern Zambia. David Livingstone, the British missionary and explorer, travelled through Zambia in the mid-19th century. He was followed by British settlers in the 1880s and 1890s. Arab slave-trading flourished in the territory throughout the 19th century, until it was ended by the British in 1893.

In 1889, the British South Africa Company received a Royal Charter to explore, develop and administer the territory. In 1924 the company ceded administrative control of Zambia, called Northern Rhodesia, to the British Crown and serious exploitation of the country's main resource, copper, began. The capital moved from Livingstone to Lusaka in 1935.

The Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, with its own constitution, existed from 1953 to 1963. Early in this period, Kenneth Kaunda founded the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC), a breakaway from the more conservative African National Congress (ANC), to fight for civil and voting rights for the African population. ZANC was quickly banned by the colonial authorities, and Kaunda arrested. During his internment, his followers evaded the ban by remoulding the ZANC as the United National Independence Party (UNIP), taking the name from the main platform of its programme.

Kaunda became chairman of the UNIP on his release in 1960. In turn, the UNIP was outlawed but it had caught the popular imagination and political demonstrations spread across the country.

The UK accepted the demands and, in January 1964, introduced a new constitution giving the country internal self-government, and organising elections. UNIP emerged as the majority party and proceeded towards independence; the Republic of Zambia became independent and a member of the Commonwealth on 24 October 1964.

Within a decade of independence, economic conditions worsened. Demand for copper was already beginning to fall and there was tumult in Southern Africa. Landlocked Zambia was badly affected by all the major conflicts of the period. The closure of the border with Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia (under the sanctions programme aimed at Ian Smith's illegal regime), disrupted exports. Civil war broke out in Angola and, in 1975, the Benguela railway was closed.

Mozambique's long battle against the Renamo dissidents began shortly after its independence in 1975; rail and oil lines were targets for attack. Sanctions against South Africa also affected Zambia's trade and transport. Refugees from these troubled countries and Namibia (engaged in the independence war with South Africa) were given sanctuary in Zambia.

The UNIP government of Kenneth Kaunda created a one-party state (lasting from 1973 until 1991) in an unsuccessful attempt to strengthen national unity. A coup plot in 1980 involved local business leaders and the governor of the Bank of Zambia. Several trade union leaders, including Frederick Chiluba, were detained during a wave of strikes in 1981, unions now having become the main focus of opposition to UNIP.

Popular discontent was fuelled by the effects of IMF-backed recovery programmes. From 1986, demonstrations (sometimes violent) against food price increases began to take a more political form, leading to demands for a more democratic system of government.

There are international airports at Lusaka (26km east of the city) and Mfuwe (in the South Luangwa National Park), and more than 100 other airports and airstrips throughout the country.

## Society

### KEY FACTS 2009

Population per sq km: 17  
Life expectancy: 46 years  
Net primary enrolment: 80%

**Population:** 12,935,000 (2009); 36% lives in urban areas and 11% in urban agglomerations of more than 1 million people – due to early growth of the copper mines, Zambia has one of Africa's largest urban populations: about one-fifth of the population lives in the Copperbelt; growth 2.6% p.a. 1990–2009; birth rate 42 per 1,000 people (49 in 1970); life expectancy 46 years, having fallen below the 1970 level of 49 years, due to AIDS. At independence in 1964, life expectancy was 42 years.

There are 73 indigenous ethnic groups of Bantu origin. The largest, representing about 18% of the population, is the Bemba of the north-east and Copperbelt. Others include the Tonga of Southern Province, the Nyanja of Eastern Province and Lusaka, and the Lozi of the west. There are small minorities of Europeans and Asians.

**Language:** English is the official language and is widely spoken. There are seven main African languages: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga.

**Religion:** Mainly Christians (denominations include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, New Apostolic Church, Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists); Christian beliefs are often blended with traditional beliefs; plus minorities of Muslims and Hindus.

**Media:** The daily newspapers are the state-owned *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia*, and independent *The Post*; all are published in English. Weeklies include the state-owned *Sunday Times of Zambia*.

Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation provides public radio and TV services in the main national languages and English; there are several private radio stations, mainly reaching the urban areas.

There are 11 personal computers (2005) and 63 internet users (2009) per 1,000 people.

**Education:** Public spending on education was 1.3% of GDP in 2008. There are seven years of compulsory primary education starting at age seven, and five years of secondary, with cycles of two and three years. Some 79% of pupils complete primary school (2007). The school year starts in January.

The University of Zambia was established in Lusaka in 1965, Copperbelt University, Kitwe, in 1986 and Mulungushi University, Kabwe, in 2008. There are a number of private universities, including Zambia Open University, which enrolled its first students in 2005 (established 2004), and Cavendish University, Lusaka (established 2004). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 75% (2008).

**Health:** The health service has suffered under cutbacks required by economic adjustment programmes. 60% of the population uses an improved drinking water source and 49% have access to adequate

sanitation facilities (2009). Infant mortality was 86 per 1,000 live births in 2009. Infant mortality rates fell from 141 per 1,000 live births in 1965 to 90 in 1980, then, due to AIDS, rose to 112 in 1999 and only began to fall again in 2002. Malaria is prevalent. There are regular outbreaks of cholera. Zambia was one of the first countries to admit the severity of the AIDS pandemic. AIDS prevention, control and management programmes are given prominence in all health programmes. In 2009, 13.5% of people aged 15–49 were HIV positive.

**Communications:** Country code 260; internet domain '.zm'. Most public buildings provide public phones. Mobile phone coverage is limited to urban areas, where there are also some internet cafes.

There are 7 main telephone lines and 341 mobile phone subscriptions per 1,000 people (2009).

**Public holidays:** New Year's Day, Women's Day (8 March), Youth Day (12 March), Labour Day (1 May), Africa Day (25 May), Heroes' Day (first Monday in July), Unity Day (Tuesday following Heroes' Day), Farmers' Day (first Monday in August), Independence Day (24 October) and Christmas Day.

Religious festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

## Economy

### KEY FACTS 2009

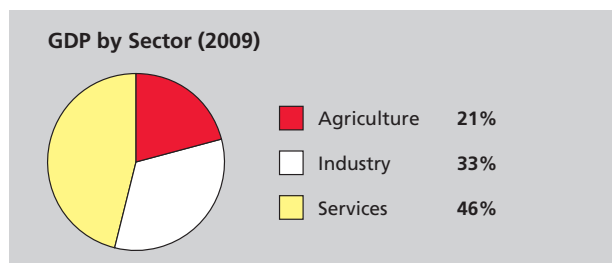
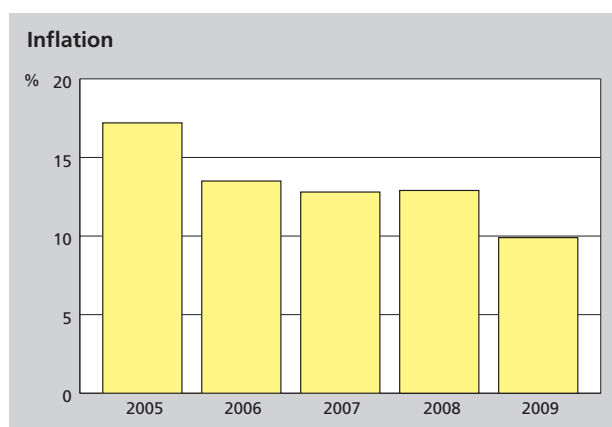
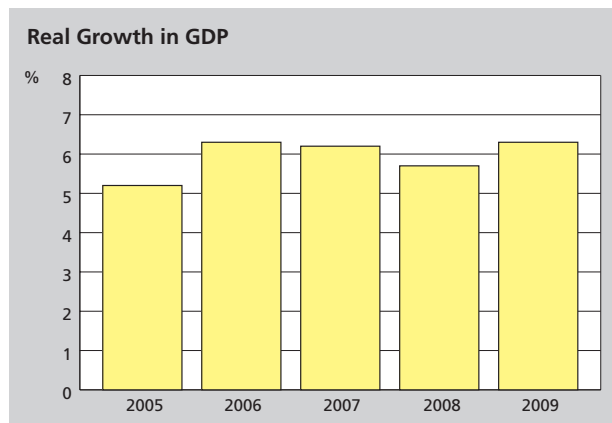
GNI: US\$12.6bn  
GNI p.c.: US\$970  
GDP growth: 5.9% p.a. 2005–09  
Inflation: 13.2% p.a. 2005–09

**Overview:** Zambia was one of the most prosperous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa until its economy foundered with the slump in world copper prices in the mid-1970s. This landlocked country's transport network was also crucially disrupted by civil unrest or liberation wars in the surrounding countries of Angola, Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The economy remains vulnerable to fluctuations in copper prices, and to drought.

The early 1990s was a difficult period, with the impact of a two-year drought being exacerbated by weak copper prices. In 1992, the government launched an economic reform programme with substantial divestment of state enterprises. By 2004, 259 state enterprises had been sold off. In 2006 75% of the shares in Zambia National Commercial Bank (one of the few remaining major state-owned enterprises) was sold to Rabobank (of the Netherlands) and to the Zambian public. The reform programme was continued, with the support of the IMF, into the 2000s, when the emphasis was on poverty reduction.

Tight fiscal policy brought inflation down from the very high levels of the mid-1990s (from a peak of 183% in 1993), though it remained at over 20% in the early 2000s. Privatisation of the copper mines by 2000 resulted in new investment and better management, and by 2004 world copper prices were rising. However, the decision in 2002 of Anglo-American to pull out of mining in Zambia for a time put in peril the higher levels of growth needed to reduce poverty.

Zambia qualified in 2005 for debt relief under the IMF/World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, deriving US\$224 million



in debt relief, which released it from 80% of its annual debt-service commitments.

This development reflected macroeconomic stability and sound fiscal policies, which had resulted in good growth in the 2000s, strengthening to an average 5.9% p.a. over 2005–09. Zambia maintained a good growth rate in 2008 (5.7%), 2009 (6.3%) and 2010 (about 6.5%), despite the adverse international economic climate.

**Trade:** Exports of goods and services account for 37% of GDP (2008). Copper dominates exports; but of growing significance are cobalt, flowers, fruit and vegetables, gemstones, cotton lint and sugar.

## Constitution

**Status:** Republic with executive president  
**Legislature:** National Assembly  
**Independence:** 24 October 1964

The 1996 constitution provides for an executive president, who is head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The

president is limited to a maximum of two five-year terms. The vice-president and the cabinet are appointed by the president from the National Assembly. The cabinet is responsible for formulating policy and for advising the president on policy. It is accountable to the National Assembly.

The legislative powers of the republic are vested in parliament, which consists of the president and the National Assembly, whose 150 members are elected every five years from single-member constituencies. The president has the power to nominate eight special members of the National Assembly, five of whom can serve in the cabinet.

Both the president and the National Assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage. The election regulations are drawn up by an Electoral Commission, which may also prescribe and review the limits of constituency boundaries. The constitution contains a bill of rights, setting out the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, and providing protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, tribe, gender, place of origin, marital status, political opinions, colour or creed.

## Politics

**Last elections:** September 2011 (presidential and legislative)  
**Next elections:** 2016 (presidential and legislative)  
**Head of state:** President Michael Sata  
**Head of government:** the president  
**Ruling party:** Patriotic Front

In July 1990, the 17-year ban on organised opposition groups was lifted. Three days later, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was founded. The elections in October 1991 gave a substantial majority to the MMD and its presidential candidate, Frederick Chiluba.

However, continuing discontent with economic conditions and the effects of severe drought led to a new wave of strikes within a year and problems in parliament. A breakaway group of nine MMD MPs formed the National Party in August 1993.

In March 1994 the government appointed a commission to rewrite the constitution and a draft new constitution was submitted to the president in June 1995, the commission recommending that it should be approved by a national referendum. The government argued that it should instead be adopted by the National Assembly before the forthcoming elections (held in November 1996). The Assembly did so in June 1996, despite international criticism and the suspension of some aid.

Among controversial government amendments to the constitution were clauses that specified that a president could serve a maximum of two five-year terms, thus disallowing the candidacy of Kenneth Kaunda, former president for 27 years and presidential candidate of the opposition United National Independence Party (UNIP). UNIP also objected to clauses debarring any person from candidacy whose parents are not or were not Zambian citizens (Kaunda's parents came from Malawi).

Most of the opposition parties boycotted the November 1996 elections (UNIP because its leader was debarred under the new constitution). There was a landslide victory for the MMD. But

because of the boycott, many leading opposition parties did not have any seats in the National Assembly. Turnout was 56% of those registered to vote, although it is estimated that only 50% of those eligible were registered. The MMD won 131 of the 150 seats with a 60% vote, while Chiluba won 73% of the presidential vote. The largest opposition party was then the National Party, with five seats.

In May 2001 Vice-President Christon Tembo led more than 80 senior members of MMD to leave the party and form the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD). Since, under the constitution, Chiluba could not stand for a third term of office and he was unable to muster enough support for constitutional change, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa was chosen in August as MMD's candidate for the 2001 presidential election. This choice was controversial and, as the elections approached, Chiluba faced growing divisions within the ruling party.

In a very close contest and with only 29% of the votes Mwanawasa won the December 2001 presidential election, Anderson Mazoka of the United Party for National Development (UPND) came second with 27%, Tembo (FDD) received 13%, Tilyeni Kaunda (UNIP) 10% and Ben Mwila (Republican Party) 5%.

Though, with 69 Assembly seats, MMD was well ahead of UPND (49 seats) in the simultaneous general election, even with its eight nominated members, it was short of an absolute majority and it was theoretically possible for the opposition to bring down the government. However, with such a fragmented opposition any serious challenge to the government seemed unlikely, and during 2003 Mwanawasa encouraged further fragmentation by bringing several individual opposition members into positions in his government.

In a fiercely contested presidential election in September 2006, Mwanawasa won a second term substantially increasing his share of the votes to 43%. Michael Sata of the Patriotic Front came second with 29% of the votes; Hakainde Hichilema of United Democratic Alliance came third with 25%. In the simultaneous parliamentary elections Mwanawasa's MMD gained 72 seats and with the eight nominated members a narrow overall majority over the Patriotic Front (46 seats) and the United Democratic Alliance (27).

Levy Mwanawasa suffered a stroke in June 2008 and died in August of that year. Vice-President Rupiah Banda became acting president in June 2008 and was sworn in as president in November, shortly after he won the October 2008 presidential by-election with 40.6% of votes. He defeated Sata of the Patriotic Front (38.6%) and Hichilema of the UPND (20%). Turnout was 45%.

The most controversial of the recommendations of the draft report of the National Constitutional Conference, which was published in July 2009, concerned limiting the powers of the president and changing the basis of presidential elections so that presidents are elected by at least 50% of the electorate, rather than the simple majority required by the 1996 constitution, thus introducing the potential for multiple rounds of voting. Supporters of this change believed that this would strengthen the prospects of a fragmented opposition, while detractors argued it would increase the cost of elections.

Presidential, parliamentary and local elections were held on the same day in September 2011. Michael Sata (Patriotic Front) won the presidential election, securing about 43% of the votes cast; the incumbent Banda (MMD) took about 36% and Hichilema (UPND) about 18%. A Commonwealth observer group led by former Nigerian president General Yakubu Gowon affirmed that the elections represented further progress for Zambia in strengthening its democratic processes and that voters were able to express their will freely.

## International relations

Zambia is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Non-Aligned Movement, Southern African Development Community, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

Zambia hosts the headquarters of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in Lusaka.

## Traveller information

**Local laws and conventions:** Possession or use of illegal drugs is prohibited and punishments can be severe.

Visitors are able to take photographs in most places but are advised to avoid military installations. Permission must be sought before taking photographs of local residents. Tipping in hotels has been abolished by law, and a 10% sales tax is usually added to bills.

Customs and traditional beliefs vary between the different regions of Zambia. Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting.

Formal dress is expected for business meetings and English is widely used. Office hours are Mon–Fri 0800–1300 and 1400–1700.

**Immigration and customs:** Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the intended length of stay, and should also contain at least two blank pages. Nationals of Commonwealth countries do not require visas to enter Zambia except for the following countries that have a reciprocal visa regime with Zambia: Australia, Canada, The Gambia, Ghana, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and the UK. More often than not, nationals of non-Commonwealth countries require visas.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate will be required by all those arriving from infected areas.

Customs may ask to see prescriptions for any medication bought into Zambia. Souvenirs may be exported without restriction but game trophies, such as teeth, bones, horns, shells, claws, skin, hair, feathers or other durable items are subject to export permits.

**Travel within the country:** Traffic drives on the left and visitors will need an international driving permit to drive. Car hire is available in several main cities. The general speed limit on national highways is 100kph and is reduced to 65kph in built-up areas. It is illegal to drink-drive or to use a mobile phone while driving.

There are three main train lines which operate frequent services from Livingstone to Lusaka, from Lusaka to the Copperbelt, and from Kapiri Mposhi to the northern border with United Republic of

Tanzania. Chartered flights also run services between the main centres.

There is a network of buses connecting the major towns; buses are generally frequent, clean and inexpensive. Urban bus services are provided by private minibuses. Taxis are widely available but are not metered and fares should be agreed in advance. Chauffeur-driven cars are also available to hire.

**Travel health:** Comprehensive medical insurance that includes emergency air evacuation is recommended.

Visitors will need protection against malaria as well as insect repellent and suitable clothing to prevent mosquito bites. Tuberculosis is present in some parts of the country and it may be advisable to be vaccinated against this, although all up-to-date vaccination requirements must be checked well in advance of travel. Outbreaks of cholera and dysentery are frequent, especially in the rainy season.

All water should be filtered and boiled or bought in sealed bottles.

**Money:** The local currency is the kwacha. Only reputable banks and bureaux should be used for changing foreign currency, as there are counterfeit notes in circulation. Major credit cards are increasingly being accepted, though paper transactions rather than electronic are the norm. Travellers cheques are widely accepted and should be taken in US dollars, pounds sterling or euros to avoid additional exchange rate charges. ATMs are available that accept Visa. Banking hours are Mon–Fri 0815–1430. (Some banks open 0815–1030 on the first and last Saturday of the month.)

There were 812,000 tourist arrivals in 2008.

## Further information

The President of the Republic of Zambia:  
[www.statehouse.gov.zm](http://www.statehouse.gov.zm)

Commonwealth Secretariat: [www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)

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