# Completion of Chibuluma Rd unlocking new business opportunities

By SYLVIA MWEETWA

THE recent completion of Kitwe's Chibuluma Road, which was in a deplorable condition, has brought excitement and hope for an improved road network in the city.

The flagging off of feeder road rehabilitation in Kitwe marked a significant milestone in the ongoing development agenda of our district.

The earth-moving pieces of equipment procured using the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which was handed over during the event was an advantage.

The machines will play a crucial role in enhancing the maintenance and rehabilitation of the road network and ensuring smoother transportation of goods and services, and boosting local economic activities in Kitwe.

It is gratifying that nearly all the five constituencies have succeeded in procuring at least one piece of such equipment, a clear demonstration of unity and a shared resolve to address one of the most pressing infrastructural challenges facing Kitwe communities.

It is worth noting that, in the 2025 national budget, the government prudently set aside K3.2 million per constituency specifically to support the rehabilitation of feeder roads under the CDF.




•PRESIDENT Hakainde Hichilema accompanied by Kitwe Mayor Mpasa Mwaya, among others, checking on Chibuluma Road.

The allocation reflects the government's recognition of the vital role feeder roads play in stimulating local economies and improving people's quality of life.

It is well understood that poor road infrastructure has a debilitating effect on economic activities, particularly in rural areas and the rehabilitation of these feeder roads will not only facilitate faster and safer transportation of goods and people but also catalyse socio-economic transformation of the district.

During his visit to Kitwe, President Hakainde Hichilema announced that the government was positioned to construct more concrete roads across the country, following the successful completion of the Chibuluma Road project.

President Hichilema said the Road Development Agency (RDA) should also begin considering a concrete road project in Lusaka's industrial area in order to support the heavy traffic by trucks.

Mr Hichilema, who inspected the road, was happy with the workmanship on the project and further stated that, in future, such roads would be rolled out in different parts of the country.

"I am happy with the workmanship and, as government, we remain committed to a good road network as it is key to economic development," he said.

And East To West Construction and Mining Limited chief executive officer Moussa Jawada said his company had executed the project according to plan and indicated that the road would last for a long time without developing potholes.

Mines minister Paul Kabuswe supported the call for more concrete roads, particularly on the Copperbelt, saying they would boost mining logistics and operations.

Transport and Logistics Minister Frank Tayali said more concrete roads were needed to reduce the cost of repair.

Mr Tayali said the country had failed to expand its road infrastructure because of maintenance costs.

"What we are witnessing today is the embodiment of that belief. As we celebrate these milestones, let us also renew our commitment to working together for the future,"he said.

Kitwe Mayor Mpasa Mwaya said Chibuluma road had been in a deplorable state and raised a lot of outcry from motorists.

Ms Mwaya said the flagging off of the road works marked a celebration to progress, inclusivity and hope for a better future for Kitwe residents.

She said reliable roads were the lifelines of communities as they connected people to schools, health facilities, markets and opportunities.

"This initiative to improve roads in Kitwe brings me great joy as mayor because it responds directly to the long-standing calls from our residents. Areas like Chantete and Chankalamu will, for the first time, see graders working on their roads. This will open up these areas, making it easier for farmers to transport their perishable products swiftly to markets, boosting local businesses and improving livelihoods," she said.

"As we embark on this journey of development, let us all commit to working together to ensure that these projects are maintained and sustained for generations to come. Let us embrace this opportunity to build a Kitwe that is accessible, inclusive and prosperous for all."

And Kitwe Town Clerk Patrick Kambita said the feeder road rehabilitation programme under the CDF, in line with said the commencement of road works, followed a presidential directive and assured that the local authority would ensure that good roads were delivered.

He said, through this programme, it would rehabilitate approximately 100 kilometres of feeder roads across Kitwe district and that, once completed, improve mobility, strengthen trade and make it easier for people to access essential services.

"These achievements are a testament to what can be accomplished when government, communities and all stakeholders work together in unity and purpose. "They remind us that development is not a distant dream. It is something we can see, touch and benefit from it," he said.

He pointed out that the progress to improve road networks belonged to all residents.

As Kitwe residents continue to celebrate the commissioned seven-kilometre Chibuluma Road, Zambia's first concrete road, constructed at a cost of K139,318,000, there is need to safeguard against any acts of vandalism.

Chibuluma Road had undergone multiple maintenance works in the past but continued to deteriorate under the pressure of slow-moving, heavily loaded trucks. To provide a lasting solution, the government opted for a concrete surface, marking a first in the country.

Concrete roads have a lifespan of 30 to 40 years, making it more cost-effective than bituminous roads.

For many years, Kitwe residents had called for a lasting solution to the road and, as the case of Chibuluma, it has helped ease congestion in the central business district, especially by diverting heavy trucks.

As Kitwe residents await the completion of the roads in all the constituencies, clearly, Chibuluma Road is unlocking new business opportunities in the district.

# The perfect storm threatening malaria progress and how to stop it

## *Reflection from 75th session of WHO Regional Committee for Africa*



By Dr MICHAEL ADEKUNLE CHARLES

FOR two decades, the world wrote one of its greatest public health success stories. Between 2000 and 2019, global efforts saved an estimated 1.5 billion people from malaria and slashed the mortality rate by half.

The progress was hard-won, a testament to international cooperation, sustained funding and relentless innovation.

But the progress is now unraveling before our eyes.

In 2023, there were an estimated 263 million new malaria cases across 83 countries worldwide.

This is up from 252 million cases in 2022.

This means that eleven million more people's lives were impacted by malaria.

The number of deaths from malaria has stagnated at 600,000 while those who survive are sometimes left with long-term cognitive and physical disabilities from the disease.

This is an especially ironic situation as we have more tools than ever to fight malaria. From dual insecticide treated mosquito nets to vaccines and technology and AI-driven tools that can help identify and destroy mosquito larvae before they hatch.

The tools are not being scaled up fast enough, and they are not reaching those who need them the most.

We have innovative ideas but lack the funding and strategy to implement them affordably.

This week, when health leaders from across Africa and the world convened in Lusaka, to strengthen health systems and confront shared challenges in Africa, the question of access to innovation to push Africa to the finish line in the fight against malaria sat heavy in participants' minds and hearts.

Malaria is a disease that disproportionately affects Africa, with 94 percent of cases and 95 percent of deaths occurring on the continent that is still grappling with other development and humanitarian issues.

Malaria was on the agenda of the 75th session of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee, which is the decision-making body of WHO in Africa.



• CLIMATE change is creating new breeding grounds for mosquitoes, shifting the disease into new communities

The leaders warned of a 'perfect storm' of threats that are placing Africa and the world at risk of a dangerous resurgence of a disease we know how to beat.

The elements of this storm are as intense as they are familiar.

Climate change is creating new breeding grounds for mosquitoes, shifting the disease into new communities unprepared for it.

Insecticide and drug resistance are eroding the efficacy of our core weapons, leaving us vulnerable.

Humanitarian crises disrupt health services precisely where they are needed most.

And perhaps most frustratingly, a critical funding gap is starving programmes of the resources required to adapt and fight back.

Current investment in malaria falls critically short, with only $4 billion secured in 2023, less than half the needed amount.

This has created a funding deficit exceeding $4.3 billion.

Bridging this gap is both an ethical duty and a strategic economic decision; achieving 2030 elimination targets could boost Africa's gross domestic product by $127 billion.

Thus, malaria funding should be viewed not as aid, but as an investment in broader health, development and prosperity.

The consequence is not abstract.

After years of decline, malaria cases and deaths are rising.

Each statistic is a life interrupted, a child lost, a community pushed deeper into poverty.

This is not just a health crisis; it is a crisis of equity, economic stability and our collective security.

Yet, in Lusaka, despair was met with resolve.

The conference was not merely a diagnosis of the problem but a prescription for a solution.

The path forward requires a paradigm shift from defence to a smarter, more resilient offence.

We must act on three critical fronts.

First, we must prepare our health systems for a changing climate.

Dorothy Achu, team leader for tropical and vector-borne diseases at WHO, puts it thus: "We need integrated surveillance that uses data to predict rainfall patterns and risks of outbreaks to be better prepared. We need communities empowered to better adapt and respond. Building resilience is no longer optional; it is fundamental to survival."

Second, we must close the innovation and financing gap.

We need increased investment from both traditional donors and domestic sources. Here, Zambia offers a powerful model.

Third, and most importantly, we must replace promises with accountability.

Grand declarations are meaningless without follow-through.

This is why the RBM Partnership to End Malaria and African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA)'s new Malaria Ministerial Champions initiative and accountability scorecard is a game-changer.

By publicly tracking progress on funding, intervention coverage and health outcomes, we create transparency and pressure.

It turns political commitment from a photo opportunity into a measurable, results-driven endeavour.

Leaders will be judged not on their speeches but scorecards.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria on its part is consulting with countries and partners on its new strategy.

What is clear is that the strategy will be grounded on three core principles:Leadership and enhanced coordination;Financing, data and innovation.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria also pushes for Africa's leadership in local manufacturing of malaria commodities, multi-sectorial approach, building of stronger health systems and accountability mechanisms

The perfect storm is upon us, but it is not insurmountable.

We have the knowledge, the tools and the frameworks.

What we need now is the unwavering political will to see it through.

The choice is ours.

We can stand by as a decade of progress is washed away, consigning a new generation to a preventable fate.

Or we can choose to invest, innovate and hold ourselves accountable.

We can choose to end the storm, and secure a malaria-free future for all.

Join us in the urgent fight to end malaria and secure a healthier, malaria-free future for all.

Dr Michael Adekunle Charles is the chief executive officer of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria.