CUTS International

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CONSUMER WATCH



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Rising Fuel Prices Raise Consumer Concerns as CUTS Calls for Action



By:Victor Sikombe

CUTS International Lusaka has raised concerns over the latest fuel price increase, as it could further strain households, businesses and consumers already facing a high cost of living.

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) increased petrol from K25.29 to K31.46 per litre, diesel from K26.86 to K33.27, and kerosene from K27.02 to K29.76. The new prices took effect at midnight on 30 September 2026.

The higher fuel prices could increase transport, production and distribution costs, leading to higher prices for food and other essential goods. Households may also face increased transport fares, while small businesses and traders could experience higher operating costs.

CUTS also urged Government to assess the wider consumer impact of fuel-related taxes and introduce targeted, sustainable measures to protect vulnerable households and businesses. Improving efficiency across the petroleum supply chain could further help reduce avoidable costs.

Sugary Drink Taxation: A Win for Public Health, the Economy and Food Systems Transformation?





By Mwiimbu Hikaluma

Sugary drink taxation is often viewed as just another tax. However, its success should be measured by whether it encourages healthier choices and supports a stronger food system.
Sugar-sweetened beverages, including soft drinks, energy drinks and sweetened juices, are widely available and heavily marketed. Excessive consumption increases the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Countries such as Mexico, South Africa and the United Kingdom have introduced sugary drink taxes. Evidence suggests that these taxes can reduce purchases of sugary beverages and encourage manufacturers to lower sugar content.

In Zambia, the tax should be part of a broader food systems strategy. Revenue could support nutrition education, school feeding programmes, preventive healthcare and access to safe drinking water, provided it is managed transparently.

Concerns about affordability and the impact on businesses must also be addressed. Policies should protect vulnerable households while improving access to affordable, healthier alternatives.
Sugary drink taxation alone will not solve Zambia's nutrition challenges. It should be combined with consumer education, clear food labelling, responsible marketing and healthier product innovation.

Ultimately, this debate is about enabling families to make informed choices, encouraging responsible business practices and protecting public health.

IBA, ZamStats Collaborate to Strengthen Access to Information



By:Josephine Tembe

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) wants to strengthen collaboration with the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) to improve public access to information and understand how citizens across the country access and consume media.

Speaking during a courtesy call at ZamStats offices in Lusaka, IBA Director General Webster Malido said the partnership would help identify communities underserved by existing information channels and support evidence-based planning in the broadcasting sector.

Malido noted that radio and television remain important channels for reaching communities, particularly those with limited access to websites and formal reports. He highlighted the role of broadcasting in helping citizens understand public services, economic developments and other issues affecting household and business decisions.

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Meanwhile, ZamStats Statistician General Sheila Mudenda said the collaboration would help ensure that official statistics are communicated clearly and in ways that the public can understand. She emphasised the importance of using appropriate methodologies and international standards when producing and sharing statistical information.

Mudenda also highlighted ZamStats' efforts to make statistical information more accessible through animations and local-language content explaining topics such as inflation and gross domestic product (GDP).





BE MONEY SMART CONSUMERS

5 Ways to Becoming a Money-Smart Consumer

- **Budget Your Money –** Plan your income and expenses to avoid unnecessary spending.
- **Compare Before You Buy –** Check prices, quality and alternatives before making a purchase.
- **Prioritise Needs Over Wants –** Spend on essential items first and limit impulse purchases.
- **Understand Before You Sign –** Read contracts, loan terms, fees and conditions carefully before committing**.**
- **Save and Spend Wisely –** Set aside money regularly and avoid purchases that could strain your finances.

57,000 Vehicles Face Possible De-registration Over Non-Compliance



By:Josephine Tembo

Approximately 57,000 vehicles risk de-registration from the National Vehicle Register after remaining inactive for more than five years and failing to meet statutory requirements, including the renewal of Certificates of Fitness and road tax.

The Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) gave affected vehicle owners 14 days to regularise their compliance or risk having their vehicles de-registered. Speaking to ZNBC News, RTSA Head of Public Relations Chilufya Mwewa said the de-registration process would begin 14 days after publication of the notice in the print media.

Mwewa urged vehicle owners to check the RTSA website to establish whether their vehicles appear on the de-registration list and take the necessary steps within the notice period.

The notice highlighted the importance of keeping vehicle registration and statutory documentation up to date. Affected owners are encouraged to verify their vehicle status through official RTSA channels and act within the stipulated period to avoid possible de-registration while supporting road safety and effective vehicle record management.

ZICTA Cancels Zed Mobile’s Network and Service Licences



By:Josephine Tembe

The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) cancelled the network and service licences of Beeline Telecoms Limited, trading as Zed Mobile, following the operator’s failure to resolve regulatory breaches.

The regulatory action stripped the company of its status as Zambia’s fourth mobile network operator, effective 15 September 2026.

Announcing the decision during a press briefing, ZICTA Board Chairperson Professor Mundia Muya explained that the board had taken the final step following a legal and technical review.

Professor Muya said the regulator had issued a formal notice of intention to cancel the licences on 31 August 2026, giving the operator an opportunity to explain why it should remain operational.

However, representations submitted by Beeline Telecoms on 10 September 2026 were deemed unsatisfactory, prompting the enforcement of the licence cancellations.

He added that the regulatory intervention followed years of operational stagnation and persistent non-compliance by the licensee.

ZESCO Signs Power Purchase Agreement with Hungarian Energy Firm

By:Josephine Tembo

ZESCO has signed a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Hungarian energy company EnerSynk Group to construct a 500-megawatt solar power plant on the Copperbelt. Signed in Lusaka on Monday, 14 September 2026, the agreement formed part of the Government's plan to add 6,000 megawatts of generation capacity to the national grid within five years.

ZESCO Acting Managing Director Fitzpatrick Kapepe said the agreement would help diversify Zambia's energy mix and reduce reliance on hydropower amid climate change. He said Phase One would deliver 300 megawatts within 16 months, Phase Two would add 100 megawatts within 22 months, and the final phase would contribute another 100 megawatts within 28 months.

Kapepe added that the agreement demonstrated investor confidence in Zambia's energy sector and supported the goal of achieving universal electricity access by 2030. EnerSynk Group Founder and Executive Chairman Jason Temasfieldt said the project marked the beginning of a major long-term investment in Zambia, adding that the company aimed to build, invest and deliver lasting benefits to local communities.

Zambia Development Agency Director General Albert Halwampa said the Government was targeting more electricity generation capacity over the next five years than had been achieved in the previous 60 years. The project is expected to diversify Zambia's energy supply, strengthen electricity provision and support long-term energy access.

ZRA Launches Extended Voluntary Disclosure Scheme



By:Victor Sikombo

The Government, through the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), has launched the Extended Voluntary Disclosure Scheme (EVDS), running from 17 September to 31 December 2026. The Scheme gives eligible taxpayers and businesses an opportunity to regularise their tax affairs by paying outstanding principal tax, with a 100 percent waiver of accrued penalties and interest.

Launching the Scheme in Lusaka, Minister of Finance and National Planning, Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane, described it as an opportunity for taxpayers to correct past omissions and strengthen voluntary compliance. He also highlighted the importance of tax revenue in financing the national budget and supporting Zambia's development.

ZRA Commissioner General Dingani Banda noted that tax non-compliance remains a challenge and said the EVDS demonstrates ZRA's commitment to promoting voluntary compliance and strengthening domestic resource mobilisation.



CUTS International

📞 Tel: 0211 410 098
✉️ Email: lusaka@cuts.org
📍 Address: E4 Warthog Road, Kabulonga, Lusaka
🌐 Website: CUTS International, Lusaka

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