

## Professor Lesley Macheka Participating at the 2025 World Food Forum in Rome, Italy 13-17 October 2025.

Professor Lesley Macheka, Executive Director of Innovation, Industrialisation and Enterprise Development, is attending the World Food Forum at the invitation of the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development. Professor Macheka was nominated to attend the Forum in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Research and Academia Platform in Zimbabwe, recognising his leadership in advancing science-based, nutrition-sensitive, and climate-smart food systems innovations. The World Food Forum is one of the FAO's flagship global platforms that convenes world leaders, ministers, researchers, youth, and private sector partners to identify transformative solutions for food security, nutrition, and sustainable agricultural development. This year's Forum is being held under the theme "Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future," focusing on the urgent need to accelerate climate action, promote innovation, and strengthen partnerships for resilient agri-food systems.

A key highlight of the Forum so far been the inauguration of the Zimbabwe Lounge at FAO Headquarters, presided over by the Honourable Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Dr Anxious J. Masuka and the Director-General of FAO, Dr Qu Dongyu. Honourable Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Barbara Rwodzi and other high-level dignitaries attended the event.



The Zimbabwe Lounge serves as a dynamic space for showcasing the country's innovations in agri-food value addition, investment opportunities, and ongoing research and development efforts. It also demonstrates Zimbabwe's growing role in regional and global food systems transformation and its commitment to achieving a climate-smart, inclusive, and nutrition-secure future.



Professor Macheka will also attend the Rome Water Dialogue: High-Level Segment, scheduled for Wednesday, 15 October 2025. This high-level event brings together policymakers, stakeholders scientists, and deliberate on the role of water in sustainable agri-food systems and climate resilience. Attending this dialogue is particularly significant given MUAST's ongoing work on water-efficient postharvest

technologies and climate-resilient food processing systems, which contribute directly to sustainable water use and food security in Zimbabwe's dryland regions.

Professor Macheka has also attended the High-Level Opening of the Science and Innovation Forum, which forms a core part of the World Food Forum. The session focused on leveraging science, technology, and innovation to accelerate global food systems transformation. Discussions addressed critical areas such as digital agriculture, renewable energy integration, climate-smart production, and evidence-based policymaking. These themes strongly align with MUAST's research portfolio, which includes the development of solar-powered processing technologies, and several other innovations supporting smallholder farmers and rural enterprises.

