

November: Shining a Light on Men's Mental Health in the Workplace

November has become widely recognised as Men's Mental Health Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the unique mental health challenges faced by men and encouraging open conversations that promote healing, support, and healthier lifestyles. While global campaigns such as "Movember" have drawn attention to men's physical health issues like prostate and testicular cancer, the conversation around men's mental health is equally urgent.

Many men struggle in silence due to societal expectations that discourage vulnerability and emotional expression. In workplaces, particularly, men often feel the pressure to appear strong, composed, and in control - even when they are battling stress, burnout, anxiety, or depression. The reality is that mental health challenges do not discriminate. Men across all levels of the corporate ladder - from entry-level employees to senior executives - may be experiencing overwhelming emotional strain, financial stress, family responsibilities, career uncertainty, or unresolved trauma. However, cultural norms often teach men to "tough it out"

rather than seek help, leading many to internalise pain. This silence can have devastating consequences: globally, men account for a significant majority of suicide deaths, highlighting the critical need for safe, supportive environments where men can ask for help without fear of judgment.

What Can Corporates Do?
Corporates have an important role to play in shifting this narrative. Workplaces provide the structure, relationships, and resources that can support mental wellness - if intentionally designed to do so. Here are practical steps organisations can take:

1. **Normalise Conversations Around Mental Health** - Host awareness campaigns, dialogues, and training sessions that specifically address men's mental health. When these conversations become part of workplace culture, stigma begins to fall away.
2. **Provide Access to Professional Support** - Offer confidential counselling services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), and mental health days. Men are more likely to seek help when they know the process is private and judgment-free.

3. **Train Leaders to Lead with Empathy** - Managers need the skills to recognise signs of emotional distress and respond appropriately. Simple acts of empathy from leaders can create psychological safety and foster trust.

4. **Promote Work-Life Balance** - Encourage leave days, flexible work arrangements, and respect for personal time. Burnout is often a silent trigger for mental health decline among men.

5. **Support Peer Connection and Mentorship** - Peer support groups or mentorship programs give men the space to connect with others who may understand their challenges.

A Call to Action
As we mark Men's Mental Health Month this November, let us commit to building a workplace culture where men feel seen, heard, and supported. To employers and corporate leaders: your policies, your leadership approach, and your culture can save lives. To colleagues: check on the men around



you - your co-workers, your associates, your friends, your fathers, your brothers. Let us break the silence. Let us rewrite the story. Let us make it safe for men to heal. Because mental wellness is not a luxury - it is a human right.

Rationale for a Tax Holiday for SMEs: A Boost to Zimbabwe's Economic Development Strategy

By Stephen Mashingaidze

To Hon. Prof. Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance and Economic Development

Hon Minister Prof Mthuli Ncube,

As you navigate the complexities of Zimbabwe's economic landscape, it's clear that your efforts are crucial in driving growth and improving the lives of citizens. Your leadership in pushing for reforms and infrastructure development is commendable.

However, Zimbabwe faces structural challenges that require careful consideration and strategic decisions. The lack of a strong manufacturing base, limited export-driven growth, and constrained bilateral deals are pressing concerns.

A key step forward is to prioritize policies that drive economic diversification, support SMEs, and attract investment to stimulate growth and job creation.

As Zimbabwe strives to revitalize its economy and stimulate growth, it is imperative to recognize the pivotal role Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play in driving economic development. SMEs are the backbone of the country's economy, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and innovation. In light of this, I propose that the government considers granting a tax holiday to SMEs with immediate effect.

The SME sector is a key driver of GDP growth, accounting for approximately 60% of the country's GDP and employing over 5 million people. By supporting



Prof. Stephen Mashingaidze

SMEs, the government can leverage their potential to drive economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve living standards.

A tax holiday for SMEs would have a significant multiplier effect on the economy. By reducing the tax burden, SMEs would increase investment, boost employment, enhance competitiveness, stimulate

entrepreneurship, and increase government revenue.

To drive sustainable growth, Zimbabwe must invest in key sectors like energy, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics process automation (RPA). The government should develop energy infrastructure, promote AI and RPA adoption, and provide incentives to businesses that invest in these sectors.

A comparison with Dubai, a global business hub, highlights the potential for

Zimbabwe to create a more business-friendly environment. Dubai's pro-business policies, tax-free zones, and world-class infrastructure have attracted international businesses and SMEs, driving economic growth and job creation. Zimbabwe can learn from Dubai's success and implement policies to support SME growth, such as granting a tax holiday, investing in infrastructure, and promoting export-oriented production.

The 2026 national budget presents an opportunity to drive economic growth and development. I urge the government to grant a tax holiday to eligible SMEs, invest in key sectors, and support SMEs and corporates to invest in these areas.

Recommendations:

1. Grant a tax holiday to eligible SMEs for a period of 2-3 years.
2. Direct substantial investments into energy, AI, and RPA sectors to drive growth and innovation.
3. Provide incentives to SMEs and corporates that invest in these sectors.
4. Implement a phased approach, starting with priority sectors, such as manufacturing and agriculture.
5. Regularly review the impact of the tax holiday and adjust as necessary.

By prioritizing SMEs and key sectors, Zimbabwe can drive inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and set the country on a path to sustainable development.

In light of this, I would like to reiterate the importance of granting a tax holiday to SMEs in Zimbabwe. This move would provide much-needed relief to SMEs, enabling them to invest in growth, create jobs, and contribute to the country's economic development. The government should also prioritize investing in infrastructure, promoting export-oriented production, and providing support to SMEs to drive sustainable growth.