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2027 Social Sector Budget Analysis

From Recovery to Results: Making Growth Deliver for Every Child

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zambia's 2027 National Budget marks an important transition from economic stabilisation towards growth, creating opportunities to strengthen investment in human capital and improve livelihoods. Following years of debt distress, economic instability and successive climate shocks, the country enters 2027 with stronger macroeconomic fundamentals, easing inflation and reduced debt-service pressures. The Grow Zambia Agenda places economic expansion, job creation and productivity at the centre of national development. However, poverty and vulnerability remain widespread, with 60.0% of the population living below the poverty line and 6.6 million children experiencing multidimensional poverty, according to analyses based on the 2022 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey. The challenge is to ensure that economic recovery translates into sustained improvements in household welfare, quality public services and resilience to future shocks.

These national trends also mask substantial geographic and socioeconomic inequalities. Ensuring that recovery delivers for every child will require greater attention to where deprivation is concentrated and whether public resources are reaching children and communities facing overlapping disadvantages.

Social sector financing increases, but the shift in fiscal priority remains modest. Combined allocations for education, health, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) rise by 13.1%, from K76.71 billion in 2026 to K86.75 billion in 2027, slightly ahead of the 12.5% growth in the national budget. Their share of the national budget increases marginally from 30.3% to 30.5%, though still remaining below the 33.4% recorded in 2024. Debt service falls from K73.70 billion to K67.60 billion, easing fiscal pressure, yet it still equals roughly 77.9% of social sector allocations. Domestic borrowing and refinancing obligations continue to constrain fiscal flexibility. Moreover, the projected 2026 fiscal deficit of 5.9% of GDP, against an original target of 2.1%, and substantial in-year budget adjustments, underscore the importance of budget credibility. The gains in fiscal space will only translate into improved outcomes if social allocations are protected, released predictably and executed effectively.

Summary table: Social sector allocations as share of the total national budget, 2026–2027

Sector	2026 share	2027 share	Nominal growth
Education	13.1%	13.4%	+15.7%
Health	10.3%	10.6%	+15.6%
Social protection	6.2%	5.7%	+3.2%
WASH (Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) programme)	0.72%	0.73%	+13.6%
Combined social sectors	**30.3%**	**30.5%**	**+13.1%**

Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Budget Speech and 2027 Yellow Book (functional allocations for education, health and social protection; Head 52 Water Supply and Sanitation programme allocation for WASH). WASH is represented by the WSS programme allocation rather than the broader Housing and Community Amenities function. WASH shares are shown to two decimal places because they are below 1.0% of the national budget. Shares are calculated from unrounded budget estimates and may not sum exactly to the combined share.

KEY FINDINGS ACROSS THE SOCIAL SECTORS

Education: Increased financing provides a stronger foundation for learning and retention, but implementation across the education pathway remains uneven

Education receives K38.24 billion, an increase of 15.7%, with dedicated curriculum materials funding nearly doubling in primary and more than doubling in secondary, alongside school feeding more than doubling. These investments directly support implementation of the competence-based curriculum, classroom learning, attendance and retention. However, Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing declines by 10.3%, while personal emoluments absorb most of the increase in secondary education. The priority is therefore to ensure that the increased allocations translate into timely delivery of materials, effective teacher preparation, reliable school meals and improved learning and completion outcomes.

Health: Greater investment in primary healthcare is encouraging, but its sustainability depends partly on the transition from external to domestic financing.

Health allocations increase by 15.6% to K30.25 billion, while Primary Health Services grows by 25.5%, compared with 2.6% for Hospital Services. This stronger primary healthcare allocation includes K3.47 billion in US Government support, equivalent to approximately 28.7% of the programme allocation. Planned recruitment of 3,125 frontline health workers and a K97.50 million allocation for community health workers provide further opportunities to improve access. Sustaining these gains will require predictable domestic financing, equitable workforce deployment, reliable medicine distribution and stronger preparedness for public-health and climate-related shocks.

Social protection: The transition towards almost full domestic financing of the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) is a highly commendable achievement.

The SCT allocation rises by 35.5% to K10.36 billion, with Government financing 98.8% of the programme, compared with 88.1% in 2026. This demonstrates strong national ownership and provides a more sustainable foundation for protecting vulnerable households as external support declines. Higher transfer values and expanded coverage further strengthen income protection. The next step is to connect cash assistance more systematically with hefalthcare, nutrition, education, child protection, livelihoods and shock-responsive support.

Nutrition, Child Protection and Disability Inclusion: Selected allocations increase, but financing remains fragmented across votes and difficult to assess comprehensively.

Under Head 46, nutrition supplements increase to K25.00 million and the transfer to the National Food and Nutrition Commission rises to K15.17 million, while a further K12.91 million is identifiable under Head 89 for nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Under Head 45, the Child Development Programme increases to K36.03 million and Child Welfare and Adoption Services to K2.20 million, while selected district social welfare financing moves to Head 20. Separately identifiable allocations for Disability Affairs and special education grants under Heads 45 and 80 increase to K77.11 million. These increases are positive, but nutrition mainstreaming, devolved child protection financing and the resources available for assistive products and rehabilitation remain insufficiently visible across the Budget. These areas do not correspond to single budget votes; their financing is distributed across several heads, programmes and intergovernmental transfers. The analysis therefore reports separately identifiable allocations and does not treat them as comprehensive sector envelopes.

WASH: Water security is gaining prominence, but investment must deliver functioning and affordable services.

The Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation receives K3.03 billion, an increase of 12.6%, while the Water Supply and Sanitation programme receives K2.08 billion. The sector remains highly capital-intensive, with persistent challenges in service continuity, maintenance and affordability. Increased financing for commercial utilities and the stronger emphasis on water security create opportunities to improve performance, but investment in productive water infrastructure must complement essential WASH services for households, schools and health facilities.

Climate and shock resilience: Higher disaster financing must translate into earlier and more effective action.

Allocations to the Disaster Risk Management Division (DRMD) and central contingency increase substantially, but financing for specific anticipatory interventions remains difficult to identify. With approximately 1.25 million people projected to experience Crisis-level food insecurity during the 2026/27 lean season, anticipated El Niño conditions reinforce the need for preparedness, predictable financing and protection of essential services. Existing social protection systems provide an important platform for responding to shocks, but clearer financing and activation arrangements are needed.



CROSS-CUTTING POLICY PRIORITIES

The 2027 Budget provides an opportunity to convert economic recovery and debt relief into lasting human development gains. Its success will depend not only on the level of resources allocated, but on how effectively public financing improves service quality, reduces deprivation and strengthens the ability of households and communities to withstand future shocks. Ensuring that growth delivers for every child requires sustained investment in human capital, credible budget execution and a deliberate commitment to equity and the progressive realisation of economic and social rights.

Six priorities emerge:

1. **Anchor the Grow Zambia Agenda and Ninth National Development Plan (9NDP) in measurable human-development outcomes.** Pair growth and production targets with commitments to learning, nutrition, health and poverty reduction.

2. **Safeguard fiscal space and improve budget credibility.** Translate debt relief into protected social allocations and predictable releases, while managing domestic borrowing and refinancing risks.

3. **Strengthen sustainable and equitable domestic financing** Expand domestic financing of essential services while assessing the distributional effects of consumption taxes and mobile money levies, with safeguards for vulnerable households.

4. **Prioritise service quality, equity and results.** Match investments in personnel, infrastructure and digital systems with operational financing and frontline capacity, while directing resources towards districts and populations experiencing the greatest deprivations. Strengthen reporting on whether financing translates into measurable improvements in service quality and outcomes for children.

5. **Institutionalise shock-responsive and climate-resilient financing.** Connect early-warning systems to pre-arranged financing, strengthen emergency social protection and protect essential services in climate-affected communities.

6. **Strengthen transparency and accountability for public investment.** Make spending on nutrition, disability inclusion, child protection and devolved services traceable, and connect allocations, releases and expenditure to measurable results.

1. Fiscal Recovery and Social Investment: Anchoring Growth in Human Capital

1.1 Fiscal space is improving, but debt and domestic borrowing continue to constrain social investment

The 2027 Budget consolidates earlier gains in social investment rather than signalling a substantial shift in fiscal priorities. Although allocations increase in nominal terms, and modestly in real terms if inflation remains within the 6–8% target range, the combined social sector share rises only from 30.3% to 30.5%, remaining below the 33.4% recorded in 2024. Education and health gain budget share, while social protection grows by only 3.2% in nominal terms and WASH remains below 1.0% of the national budget. The Grow Zambia Agenda places economic expansion at the centre of the Budget, but itssuccess will depend equally on the human capital required to sustain productivity and improve livelihoods. The priority is to ensure that expanded access translates into quality, equitable services and the progressive realisation of human rights, including the rights to education, health, safe water and an adequate standard of living.

Zambia enters 2027 on stronger macroeconomic footing, with easing debt-service pressures creating opportunities for greater investment in human capital. Combined social sector allocations for key services for children (education, health, social protection and WASH) increase by 13.1%, from K76.71 billion (2026) to K86.75 billion (2027) in nominal terms, slightly ahead of the 12.5% growth of the national budget. Debt service declines from K73.70 billion to K67.60 billion, equivalent to 23.7% of the total budget compared with 29.1% in 2026. These developments are encouraging, although debt service still amounts to approximately 77.9% of social sector allocations.

Debt restructuring has eased near-term debt-service pressures, but fiscal space remains constrained by domestic borrowing and refinancing obligations. The 2027 Annual Borrowing Plan anticipates K28.85 billion in net domestic borrowing, while substantial maturing securities will require refinancing. These obligations expose the Budget to borrowing costs and market conditions, reinforcing the importance of protecting predictable financing for essential social services (MoFNP, 2026c).

1.2 Budget credibility: protecting allocations and financing service quality

Higher allocations will deliver results only if resources are released predictably and support the inputs required for quality services. The projected 2026 fiscal deficit of 5.9% of GDP, against an original target of 2.1%, illustrates the pressures on budget implementation. Two supplementary appropriations amounting to approximately K46.27 billion also demonstrate the scale of in-year adjustments, although part of the financing involved reallocations within the approved budget (National Assembly of Zambia, 2026a; 2026b). Year-on-year allocation comparisons in this report use the originally approved 2026 Budget and the 2027 estimates. Supplementary appropriations and in-year reallocations are considered separately and are not incorporated into the allocation-growth calculations.

These adjustments also raise questions about the financing baseline for 2027. The Annual Borrowing Plan provides for net domestic borrowing of K28.85 billion, compared with K21.60 billion in the original 2026 plan, but does not reconcile this with the revised borrowing requirements arising during 2026. It projects K115.00 billion in gross domestic securities issuance, including K86.15 billion to refinance maturing obligations. This matters because additional borrowing can affect the debt stock, future maturities and interest obligations, potentially reducing the fiscal space available for social spending. Greater transparency on actual borrowing, refinancing needs and borrowing costs would strengthen confidence in the 2027

fiscal framework (MoFNP, 2026c).

Budget execution remains equally important. The 2027–2029 Medium-Term Budget Plan (MTBP) shows that for 2026 releases for goods and services were 7.4% below target, while social benefits were 27.3% below target (MoFNP, 2026d, p. 26). The sector analyses demonstrate why these shortfalls matter: education allocations are concentrated in personal emoluments and selected interventions, while ECE infrastructure financing declines; health financing increases, but medicines and medical supplies remain broadly unchanged in nominal terms; and WASH requires sustained financing for maintenance, rehabilitation and service continuity.

Stronger quarterly release planning, transparent borrowing and expenditure reporting, and protection of essential frontline inputs will be critical to ensuring that increased allocations translate into better services and outcomes for children. Budget credibility should increasingly be assessed not only in terms of expenditure execution, but also by whether resources reach frontline services and translate into measurable results for children.

Alignment of the 2027 Budget with MTBP priorities

Priority	Budget evidence	Assessment
Education	13.4% of national budget allocation	Above the MTBP's 13.1% average for 2027–2029
Health	10.6% of national budget allocation	Consistent with the MTBP's 10.6% average
Nutrition	Nine institutions required to mainstream nutrition as per Budget Call Circular	Policy requirement established; consolidated financing remains difficult to identify
Social Protection	Social Cash Transfer (SCT) financing from national budget expands substantially	Stronger domestic financing, but the broader social protection function loses budget share
WASH	WSS programme increases by 13.6%	Increased allocation, but operational financing and service continuity require attention
Child Protection	Selected allocations increase	Uneven recovery and continued financing challenges for frontline services

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Note: The education and health percentages cited in the MTBP are averages over 2027–2029, not necessarily binding annual ceilings.
Source: Author's assessment based on the 2027 Yellow Book (MoFNP, 2026b), the 2027–2029 MTBP (MoFNP, 2026d) and the 2027–2029 Budget Call Circular (MoFNP, 2026e).

1.3 Domestic financing: strengthening sustainability while protecting household welfare

The shift towards domestic financing is an important development in a changing global financing landscape, but its sustainability depends on revenue performance, borrowing costs and the distribution of the tax burden. Domestic revenue is expected to finance 82.1% of the 2027 Budget, compared with 58.7% in 2021. This transition is particularly evident in social protection, where Government finances 98.8% of the Social Cash Transfer allocation. However, health and WASH continue to rely on substantial external financing. As domestic financing grows, external financing should increasingly be used strategically to strengthen nationally owned systems, close critical equity and financing gaps and catalyse sustainable domestic investment, rather than create parallel delivery arrangements. Engagement with cooperating partners and international financial institutions should therefore be aligned around nationally owned, costed priorities for children.

The Annual Borrowing Plan also anticipates K13.03 billion in external financing, including expected disbursements from a proposed new IMF Extended Credit Facility. Of the approximately US$1.46 billion facility proposed for contracting, US$312.77 million is expected to be disbursed in 2027, subject to programme approval and subsequent reviews. These assumptions highlight the importance of predictable external financing alongside stronger domestic resource mobilisation (MoFNP, 2026c).

The proposed revenue measures warrant scrutiny for their potential effects on vulnerable households. The increase in VAT from 16.0% to 16.5% could raise prices of standard-rated goods and services, partially offsetting purchasing-power gains from easing inflation. The doubling of the mobile money levy presents a similar concern, given the importance of digital payments for financial inclusion, household transfers and access to services. These effects will depend on consumption patterns, transaction values and applicable exemptions.

Strengthening domestic resource mobilisation should be accompanied by household impact assessments and targeted safeguards to prevent disproportionate burdens on vulnerable groups, protect social spending gains and advance the progressive realisation of economic and social rights.

1.4 Preparedness and delivery: strengthening systems to protect gains against future shocks

The 2027 Budget strengthens several delivery systems, but clearer financing arrangements are needed to ensure that they can respond effectively to emerging risks. The expansion of the Social Cash Transfer to 1.64 million households and planned operationalisation of the National Social Registry provide an important foundation for more integrated social protection. However, the absence of a separately identifiable Emergency Social Cash Transfer allocation leaves questions about how benefits and coverage would expand during shocks. Similarly, the integration of the Food Security Pack into other programmes requires clear implementation and financing arrangements to preserve support for vulnerable households and safeguard their right to food.

Climate and public-health risks reinforce the importance of preparedness. Anticipated El Niño conditions could place additional pressure on food security, water availability and essential services. Although DRMD's total allocation increases, its Early Warning and Preparedness allocation falls by 23.6%, from K3.75 million to K2.86 million. Clear financing and release arrangements are therefore needed to translate risk information into timely action.

In health, improvements in medicine availability need to be sustained through reliable last-mile distribution, while WASH investment must prioritise functionality and service continuity alongside infrastructure expansion. Nutrition-responsive budgeting and the devolution of nutrition functions also offer opportunities to strengthen coordination, provided financing and operational responsibilities are clearly established.

The central test of the 2027 Budget is therefore not only whether more resources are allocated, but whether financing systems can sustain quality services, protect vulnerable households, support the progressive realisation of economic and social rights, and respond effectively when shocks arise.

2. Education: From Classroom Access to Learning That Delivers

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Education gains budget priority, but the increase must finance a complete package of learning inputs.** The functional allocation rises by 15.7% to K38.24 billion, increasing its national budget share from 13.1% to 13.4%. Teachers, materials, suitable class rooms and school operations must be supported together to translate this investment into better learning.

2. **Early Childhood Education (ECE) faces a financing squeeze despite ambitious expansion targets.** Within the Ministry of Education's ECE programme, the allocation declines by 10.3% to K794.06 million, including a 52.9% reduction in infrastructure financing.

3. **Curriculum reform receives additional materials funding, but support is uneven across levels.** Dedicated materials funding rises by 82.2% to K255.09 million in primary and by 124.0% to K224.00 million in secondary, while the previous K50.00 million ECE materials line is not separately provided for in 2027. Implementation must connect procurement with teacher preparation and classroom support.

4. **School feeding expands substantially, while secondary education growth is concentrated in personal emoluments.** The K1.00 billion feeding allocation and higher personal emoluments can strengthen participation and promote equitable access to education, but retention and progression also require reliable meals, effective teaching and targeted support for learners at risk of leaving school.

2.1 Financing direction: increased priority, with delivery as the test

The 2027 Budget strengthens education's relative priority, **but the composition of expenditure determines what the increase can achieve.** The functional allocation rises from K33.04 billion to K38.24 billion, raising its share of the national budget to 13.4%, which remains below the 15–20% public expenditure benchmark in the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015).

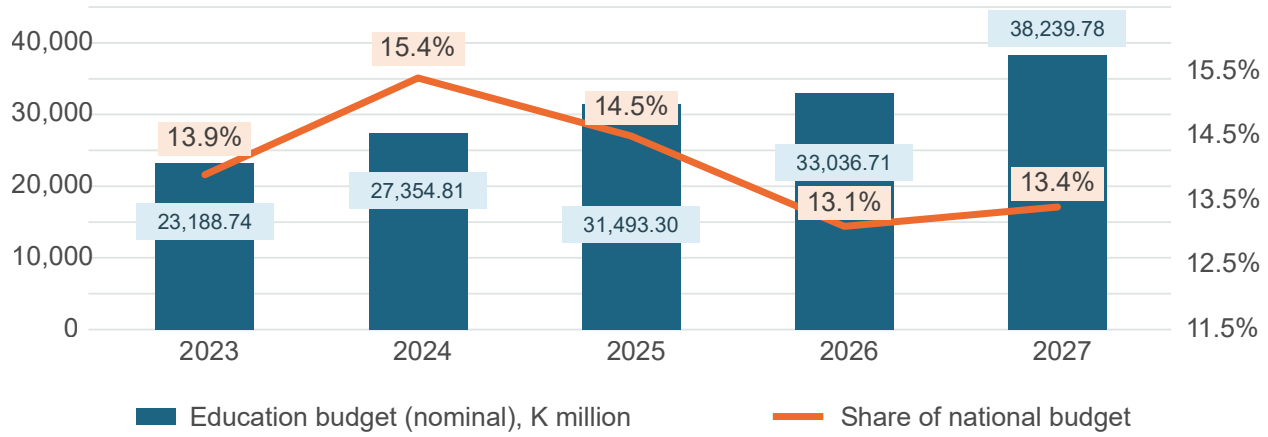
The functional education allocation covers all education spending across government institutions, including tertiary education. Although university education and skills development moved from Head 80: Ministry of Education to Head 49: Ministry of Skills and Higher Education in 2027, they remain within the education function in both years. The functional allocation therefore exceeds the Ministry of Education's institutional allocation and gives a like-for-like comparison between 2026 and 2027.

Within Head 80: Ministry of Education, personal emoluments account for 78.1% of the K30.90 billion allocation, transfers for 14.6%, assets for 5.2% and goods and services for 2.1%. Transfers include frontline inputs such as school grants and feeding, so the goods-and-services share alone does not capture all support outside personal emoluments. **The transfer of university education to a new ministry also changes**

Head 80's composition; its personal emoluments share should therefore not be interpreted as a straightforward year-on-year increase in the concentration of spending on personal emoluments.

The priority is to connect expenditure with the inputs children experience in classrooms. Reporting on teacher deployment, materials availability, school grants and infrastructure completion would provide a stronger account of delivery than allocation growth alone. Financing decisions should increasingly respond to subnational disparities in learning, teacher deployment, infrastructure and participation, rather than relying primarily on national averages.

Figure 1: Education functional allocation and share of the national budget, 2023–2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Budget Speech and 2027 Yellow Book (education functional allocation and share of the national budget, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates).

2.2 Early Childhood Education: protecting the foundations of educational success

ECE's declining allocation sits uneasily alongside the target of reaching one million children in 2027. Funding falls from K885.01 million to K794.06 million, equivalent to approximately 2.1% of the functional education allocation. Infrastructure development declines from K188.54 million to K88.78 million, while school grants increase by 73.0% to K142.22 million.

The shift is more pronounced beneath the total. **School Feeding increases from K53.00 million to K300.00 million; excluding feeding, the ECE programme allocation falls by 40.6%.** The dedicated K50.00 million allocation for teaching and learning materials under ECE in 2026 is not separately provided for in the corresponding 2027 budget line. These changes indicate a substantial reorientation towards participation support within a smaller overall programme.

Expansion must be supported by the capacity to provide quality early learning. Government should align enrolment targets with a costed plan for educators, classrooms, age-appropriate materials and operational support. The infrastructure reduction warrants particular attention against planned completion of 298 ECE hubs and satellite centres, including the contribution expected from other financing channels.

2.3 Primary education: financing foundational learning and curriculum reform

Primary education gains resources for school support and curriculum implementation. Its allocation increases by 8.3% to K14.86 billion. Within this, the Curriculum and Materials Development sub-programme rises by 80.4%, from K142.09 million to K256.33 million. The increase is driven by teaching and learning materials for the new curriculum: the dedicated materials line rises from K140.00 million to K255.09 million and accounts for 99.5% of the sub-programme in 2027. This creates an

opportunity to strengthen foundational learning through better-resourced classrooms.

The Budget Speech highlights the competence-based curriculum's emphasis on practical skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and entrepreneurship. **This commitment is backed by funding: in secondary education, dedicated materials funding more than doubles, rising by 124.0% from K100.00 million to K224.00 million.** However, only K1.24 million remains for other curriculum activities in primary education, down from K2.09 million in 2026. The investment in materials will translate into better learning only if it is matched by timely distribution, teacher preparation and classroom support.

The absence of a dedicated ECE materials provision also needs to be addressed within implementation planning, so that curriculum support is coherent from early learning onwards.

Learning conditions also depend on adequate WASH services. The MTBP prioritises sanitation facilities in schools, but comprehensive school WASH financing is not clearly identifiable in the 2027 Budget. With only around **4.6% of schools meeting combined basic WASH standards,** Government should make financing for **water, sanitation, handwashing, inclusive facilities, rehabilitation and Operations and Maintenance (O&M)** more visible so that increased education investment translates into safe and functional learning environments.

The 2027 tax measures provide complementary support for menstrual health, with 100% customs duty and VAT exemptions on imported raw materials used in the manufacture of sanitary pads, panty liners and related hygiene products. This could reduce local production costs and complement school-based menstrual health interventions, but implementation should ensure that lower input costs translate into **improved affordability and access for girls and adolescents.**

2.4 Secondary education: strengthening progression and completion

Secondary education receives K13.86 billion, an increase of 29.6%. However, personal emoluments rise from K7.10 billion to K10.12 billion, **absorbing 95.3% of the programme's** additional allocation, while Infrastructure Development falls by 5.9% to K1.35 billion. The headline increase therefore does not represent an equivalent expansion across all services.
The Education Statistics Bulletin 2025 reports Grade 9 completion of 68.7%, compared with 94.0% in 2022, while Grade 12 completion improves from 40.1% in 2024 to 49.6% in 2025 (Ministry of Education, 2026). Financing should respond to these different progression challenges, combining effective teacher deployment and instructional support with measures addressing poverty, distance, disability and other barriers to completion, in order to promote equitable access to education and strengthen the realisation of the right to education for all learners.

2.5 School feeding: turn expanded financing into reliable meals

School feeding is a clear spending priority, with substantial expansion in ECE and a secondary allocation introduced in the reviewed programme table. The K1.00 billion provision compares with K443.00 million in the corresponding 2026 lines, an increase of 125.7%.

Post-secondary expansion must complement sustained investment in foundational learning and school completion. Aligning training with local productive opportunities is important, but young people first need the literacy, numeracy and transferable skills required to benefit from further education.

Table 1: School feeding allocations and learner targets by level, 2026 and 2027

Level	2026 allocation	2027 allocation	2027 learner target	Annual allocation per targeted learner
ECE	K53.00m	K300.00m	900,000	K333
Primary	K390.00m	K500.00m	4,500,000	K111
Secondary	No provision shown	K200.00m	1,432,247	K140
Total	**K443.00m**	**K1,000.00m**	**6,832,247**	**K146**

Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (2026 approved allocations and 2027 estimates, Head 80: Ministry of Education) and 2027 learner targets. Allocation per targeted learner is calculated as the 2027 allocation divided by the 2027 learner target.

Implementation reporting should track children actually served, feeding days, meal quality and payment timeliness, alongside attendance and retention. This would establish whether increased expenditure provides dependable support, particularly for learners from vulnerable households.

2.6 Skills development: build on a strong school foundation

The proposed expansion of universities and technical training provides an opportunity to connect education with local economic development. Its contribution to the Grow Zambia Agenda will depend on relevant programmes, equipped institutions and pathways into employment, rather than construction or enrolment alone.Differences in allocations per learner require explanation through feeding frequency, meal specifications, procurement arrangements and complementary contributions. They do not, by themselves, establish whether financing is adequate.



3. Health: Building a Resilient System through Sustainable Financing, Quality Services and Stronger Preparedness

KEY MESSAGES

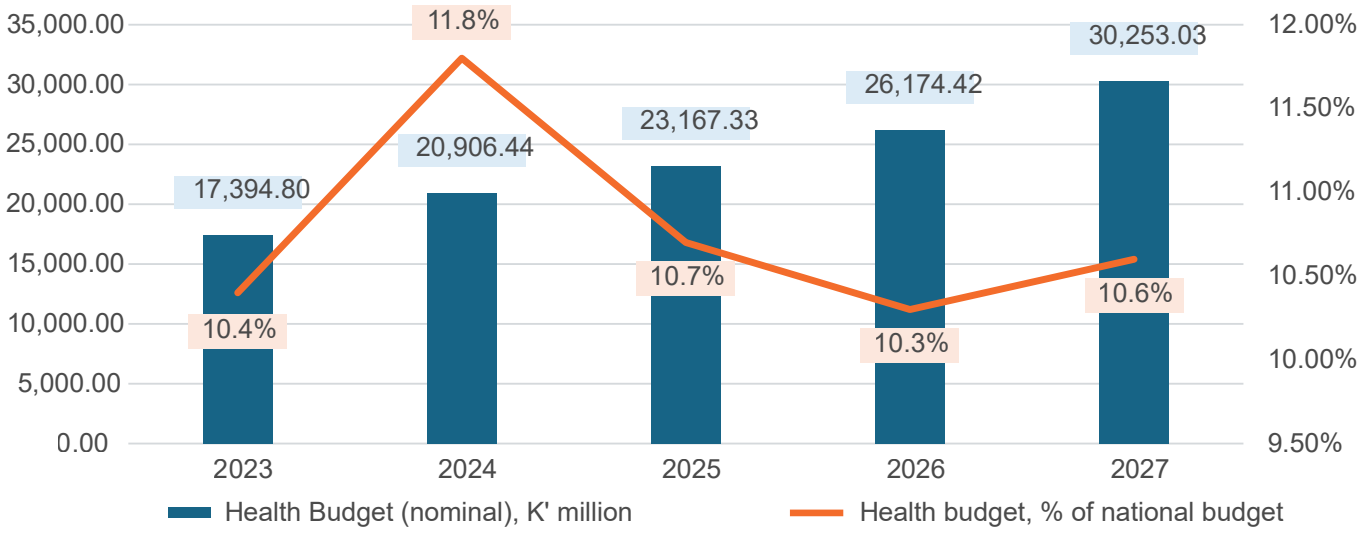
1. **Health financing increases, with a stronger emphasis on primary healthcare.** The health allocation rises by 15.6% to K30.25 billion, increasing its national budget share from 10.3% in 2026 to 10.6% in 2027. Primary Health Services grows by 25.5%, compared with 2.6% for Hospital Services, signalling greater emphasis on primary healthcare, although a significant share of the allocation is externally financed, including K3.47 billion in US Government support.

2. **Medicine financing remains broadly unchanged despite improvements in avail ability.** Approximately K6.47 billion is allocated to medicines and medical supplies, compared with K6.48 billion in 2026. Sustaining progress will require predictable domestic financing for improved public health supply chain management.

3. **Health workforce investment continues to expand,** with Government planning to recruit 3,125 frontline health workers in 2027, complemented by a K97.50 million allocation for community health workers. Equitable deployment, adequate operational support and stronger community-level services will be essential to addressing persistent staffing shortages and geographical disparities.

4. **Domestic financing and health-system preparedness require greater attention.** Significant reliance on external support, limited growth in reproductive health commodities and emerging climate-related health risks reinforce the need for sustainable financing, stronger supply chains and effective outbreak preparedness.

Figure 2: Health functional allocation and share of the national budget, 2023 -2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Budget Speech and 2027 Yellow Book (health functional allocation and % share of the national budget, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates).

3.1 Health financing: increased investment and a stronger primary healthcare focus

The 2027 Budget increases health financing, with Primary Health Services receiving a larger share of additional resources. The functional health allocation rises by 15.6%, from K26.17 billion in 2026 to K30.25 billion in 2027, increasing its share of the national budget from 10.3% to 10.6%. Nevertheless, this remains 4.4 percentage points below the 15% Abuja commitment, equivalent to an indicative difference of K12.47 billion from the 15% Abuja budget-share benchmark (Organisation of African Unity, 2001). The 2023 UN Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage also recalls a recommended target of an additional 1% of GDP or more for primary healthcare, equivalent to approximately K10.03 billion for Zambia in 2027 (United Nations General Assembly, 2023). This is a recommended financing ambition, not an independently established financing shortfall. These benchmarks underscore the importance of progressively increasing public investment in health to advance universal health coverage, reduce financial hardship and support the progressive realisation of the right to health.

Within Head 46: Ministry of Health, the allocation reaches K28.07 billion. Primary Health Services increases by 25.5%, from K9.63 billion to K12.08 billion, compared with a 2.6% increase in Hospital Services, from K12.81 billion to K13.14 billion (MoFNP, 2026b). This narrows the allocation gap between primary and hospital services and signals greater emphasis on primary healthcare. However, the K3.47 billion in US Government support accounts for approximately 28.7% of the 2027 programme allocation, while previous PEPFAR and Global Fund lines are no longer separately presented (MoFNP, 2026b). This is consistent with the Lusaka Agenda's emphasis on aligning external financing with national health priorities, although stronger domestic financing remains essential for sustainability.

3.2 Medicines and medical supplies: protecting gains through reliable delivery

The allocation for medicines, medical commodities and related supplies remains broadly unchanged at K6.47 billion in 2027, compared with K6.48 billion in 2026, while its share of the Ministry of Health budget declines from 26.2% to 23.1%. Within this envelope, essential medicines decline by 3.6%, from K3.08 billion to K2.97 billion. Medical equipment allocations also decline, from K21.50 million to K20.00 million under Primary Health Services and from K52.50 million to K50.00 million under Hospital Services. The K153.80 million investment in data management systems, including logistics information management, presents an opportunity to strengthen supply-chain efficiency and visibility. With reported medicine availability reaching 83.0%, slightly above the 80% benchmark, sustaining these gains will require adequate financing and reliable distribution to health facilities.

Government should prioritise predictable commodity financing and a costed last-mile distribution strategy, with clear responsibilities for the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA), district health structures and facilities. Performance monitoring should track medicine availability, stock-outs and delivery efficiency, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

3.3 Health workforce: linking recruitment to equitable service delivery

The 2027 Budget provides for the recruitment of 3,125 frontline health workers, below the target of 5,000 set in the National Health Policy Implementation Plan for the same year (Ministry of Health, 2026). While this represents an important investment in expanding health services, addressing persistent staffing shortages will require equitable deployment, effective retention and adequate operational support. The Budget also allocates K97.50 million to community health workers, recognising their role in extending preventive and essential healthcare services to underserved communities.

Government should use subnational evidence to align workforce recruitment, deployment and

financing with staffing gaps, disease burden, service demand and geographic inequalities, with particular attention to underserved districts. Clear recruitment, deployment and retention targets, particularly for rural health centres and underserved districts, alongside adequate medicines, equipment and supervision, will be essential to translating workforce investments into improved access and quality of care.

3.4 Reproductive health: protecting essential commodities and maternal health services

Reproductive health commodity financing increases only marginally, despite substantial family planning and maternal healthcare needs. The allocation rises by 0.9%, from K171.35 million in 2026 to K172.92 million in 2027, implying a decline in real terms. The Zambia Annual Quantification Report for Family Planning Commodities (2026–2028) estimates 2027 requirements of K238.47 million for family planning commodities and a further K146.90 million for condoms, equivalent to K385.38 million combined, using the 2026 average exchange rate of K19.08 per US$1 (Ministry of Health, 2025; Exchange Rates UK, 2026). These requirements substantially exceed the reproductive health commodity allocation, although the difference does not represent a confirmed financing shortfall without reconciling partner commitments and the scope of the budget line.

Government should strengthen predictable domestic financing for reproductive health commodities, supported by a consolidated financing plan that reconciles quantified requirements, budget allocations and partner contributions. This would improve procurement planning and help prevent interruptions in access to contraception and essential maternal healthcare supplies.

3.5 Health security: strengthening preparedness and climate resilience

The 2027 Budget introduces a separately identifiable K15.05 million allocation for Surveillance and Outbreak Response under Primary Health Services, supporting early detection, coordination and response to emerging public health threats. While a positive development, this represents only part of the broader public health preparedness financing, which also includes institutional support, laboratory services and medical commodities. The allocation complements the mandate of the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), including disease surveillance, early warning and emergency response, as established under the Zambia National Public Health Institute Act, 2020 (Government of Zambia, 2020), which also provides for a National Public Health Emergency Fund. The surveillance allocation also provides an opportunity to integrate anticipatory action by linking disease surveillance and climate early-warning information to predefined preparedness and response measures.

Anticipated El Niño conditions heighten the need for climate-resilient health services, particularly given the risks of electricity and water disruptions to health facilities, laboratories and temperature-sensitive medicines and vaccines. Financing for vaccines and cold-chain-related commodities remains unchanged at K270.90 million in 2027, implying reduction in real terms.

Climate-resilient health and nutrition services should be a core part of El Niño preparedness, as drought and flooding are likely to worsen acute malnutrition among children under five. Preparedness planning and financing should ensure capacity to treat acute malnutrition, including skilled health workers, screening, treatment commodities and functional referral services, alongside reliable last-mile distribution of nutrition commodities and essential medicines, especially in hard-to-reach and underserved communities.

4. Nutrition: Turning Policy Commitments into Financed Services

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Identifiable nutrition financing increases, with resources directed to service delivery.** Nutrition supplements rise by 31.6% to K25.00 million, strengthening direct support for the treatment of malnutrition, while the transfer to the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) increases by 3.0% to K15.17 million.

2. **Nutrition-responsive budgeting is a major milestone, but its effect on invest ment cannot yet be traced.** The Budget Call Circular's requirement for nine institutions to mainstream nutrition provides a stronger foundation for multisectoral action. Consistent identifica tion and consolidated reporting are now needed to show how this commitment changes alloca tions and delivery.

3. **Devolution must bring predictable financing and stronger services closer to communities.** The dedicated nutrition grant and proposed provincial and district positions provide an opportunity to strengthen integrated local delivery. Clear allocations, operational support and accountability are essential to translating these reforms into better nutrition for children.

4. **Treatment of acute malnutrition needs to be financed ahead of El Niño.** The increase in nutrition supplements covers an estimated 50% of commodity needs for severe wasting, while commodities for moderate wasting remain unbudgeted.

4.1 Nutrition financing: strengthening interventions and coordination

The 2027 Budget increases identifiable financing for nutrition commodities, alongside a more modest increase in institutional support. Under Head 46: Ministry of Health, nutrition supplements rise from K19.00 million to K25.00 million, while the NFNC transfer increases from K14.73 million to K15.17 million. The former strengthens commodity financing; the latter supports an institution whose technical coordination role is particularly important as nutrition responsibilities expand across government and local authorities.

Food-related expenditure provides additional delivery channels. School feeding receives K1.00 billion, discussed separately in the education section, while National Food Reserves Management receives K9.57 billion. The reserves allocation includes operations and outstanding obligations and therefore cannot be interpreted entirely as additional food for households. These investments support food access and the realisation of the right to adequate food, but their nutrition contribution depends on dietary quality, targeting and reliable delivery. The linkage between Social Cash Transfers and nutrition support during the first 1,000 days is a positive step towards connecting income support with children's nutritional needs. **Separately identifiable allocations and expenditure reporting would clarify the resources supporting this intervention and strengthen accountability for delivery.**

Table 2: Selected nutrition-related allocations, 2027

SELECTED ALLOCATION	2027 ALLOCATION	INTERPRETATION
Nutrition supplements (Head 46)	**K25.00m**	Up 31.6% from K19.00m in 2026.
NFNC transfer (Head 46)	**K15.17m**	Up 3.0% from K14.73m in 2026.
Nutrition, Climate Resilient and Stress-Tolerant Crop Technologies (Head 89: Ministry of Agriculture)	**K12.91m**	An explicitly nutrition-related agricultural investment.
Humanitarian Relief Services (Head 19: Disaster Risk Management Division)	**K253.15m**	Supports broader relief, including food assistance; nutrition component not separately costed.

Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (2027 estimates and 2026 approved allocations; Head 46: Ministry of Health, Head 89: Ministry of Agriculture and Head 19: Disaster Risk Management Division). Percentage changes are calculated from unrounded figures.

The financing priority is to connect commodities and food assistance with functioning services. Supplements require procurement, distribution, screening, counselling and follow-up. Food programmes need nutrition standards, while NFNC requires resources for technical guidance, monitoring and coordination. Investment in one component cannot substitute for the others .

The increase in the nutrition supplements allocation is commendable, but it does not yet cover the full treatment need. It covers an estimated 50% of commodity requirements for treating severe wasting, which is expected to affect an estimated 61,000 children under five in 2027, a number likely to rise under anticipated El Niño conditions. Government should progressively increase domestic financing for the treatment of acute malnutrition, while exploring catalytic co-financing opportunities, including matching arrangements through the UNICEF Child Nutrition Fund, to accelerate the expansion of treatment coverage. Commodities for moderate wasting are not included in the budget, even though an estimated 271,000 children under five will be affected in 2027; their treatment remains unbudgeted

4.2 Nutrition-responsive budgeting: making the milestone measurable

The 2027–2029 Budget Call Circular embeds nutrition more firmly within routine planning and resource allocation. It requires nine institutions to mainstream nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions into their budgets and Medium-Term Budget Plans, supported by Nutrition Responsive Planning and Budgeting Guidelines (MoFNP, 2026e).

The identifiable allocations demonstrate that nutrition financing exists. What remains unclear is the wider effect of the Circular: whether all nine institutions have incorporated the required interventions, how resources are distributed across prevention and treatment, and whether allocations respond to geographical and population needs. The Yellow Book identifies selected nutrition-specific allocations but does not consistently distinguish nutrition-related spending across the nine institutions required to mainstream nutrition. Consequently, the overall allocation, distribution across interventions and degree of implementation of the Call Circular cannot be established from the published budget alone.

Government should operationalise nutrition budget tagging and publish consolidated allocations, releases and expenditure across the nine institutions. A common attribution method would distinguish direct nutrition interventions from broader nutrition-sensitive spending, avoiding both the omission of relevant activities and the classification of entire sector budgets as nutrition expenditure. This would establish whether the reform is strengthening investment, rather than only changing planning requirements.

A preliminary review of the nine institutions' programme and subprogramme allocations could establish the extent to which nutrition interventions are identifiable in the 2027 Budget, including whether nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive activities can be distinguished and whether the devolved nutrition grant is identifiable under Head 20. However, a comprehensive assessment will require consistent nutrition tagging and expenditure attribution across institutions.

4.3 Devolution: financing local coordination and delivery

Devolution creates an opportunity to make nutrition planning more responsive to community needs. The Call Circular provides for District Food and Nutrition Functions to transfer from NFNC to local authorities from 1 January 2027, supported by a dedicated Sector Grant (MoFNP, 2026e). Proposed positions at provincial and district levels can strengthen coordination across health, agriculture, education, social protection and WASH

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The K1.48 billion Sector Devolution Programme under **Head 20: Intergovernmental Transfers** covers multiple functions and does not separately establish the nutrition grant. Publishing the nutrition-specific allocation, its distribution criteria and disbursement schedule would give local authorities a clearer basis for implementation.

Personnel must be supported by operational resources and clear responsibilities. District structures need financing for planning, supervision, outreach and monitoring, alongside NFNC's technical support and quality assurance. A costed implementation framework should connect these responsibilities with service targets for pregnant women, infants and young children.

The direction of reform is positive. **The next step is to make financing traceable and delivery dependable, ensuring that stronger budgeting rules, commodity investment and devolution work together to improve children's nutrition.**



5. Child Protection: Strengthening Core Services, Local Delivery and Digital Identity

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Core child protection financing shows an uneven recovery.** The Child Development Programme increases by 14.6% to K36.03 million, while Child Welfare and Adoption Services more than doubles to K2.20 million. However, the latter remains 35.6% below its 2025 allocation, highlighting the need for sustained and predictable financing.

2. **Decentralisation and workforce investment must bring protection services closer to children.** Higher personal emoluments and operational allocations, alongside training for 1,575 frontline workers, create opportunities to improve prevention and response. These commitments need a clear workforce and service-delivery plan linking staffing, caseloads and financing across central and local government.

3. **Digitalisation is a major investment in legal identity and child protection sys tems.** The K367.80 million allocation for the Integrated National Registration Information System (INRIS) and planned Child Information Management System provide an opportunity to improve registration, referrals and case management. Their success will depend on connecting digital infrastructure with accessible, adequately staffed frontline services.

5.1 Core financing: strengthening services, with an uneven recovery

The 2027 Budget strengthens selected core child protection services through increases in child development, child welfare and operational financing. The Child Development Programme receives K36.03 million, up 14.6% from K31.44 million in 2026, including K25.94 million for its Child Welfare sub-programme. Under the Social Welfare Programme, Child Welfare and Adoption Services more than doubles from K1.08 million in 2026 to K2.20 million in 2027. Juvenile Welfare and Probational Services receives K26.59 million.

The recovery in Child Welfare and Adoption Services is substantial compared with 2026, but funding remains 35.6% below its 2025 level. Its share of the Social Welfare Programme rises from 1.3% to 2.7%, compared with 4.1% in 2025. This pattern points to renewed support for the service, but not yet a sustained expansion of its financing.

Table 3: Social Welfare Programme and Child Welfare and Adoption Services, 2025–2027

Allocation	2025 approved	2026 approved	2027 estimate
Social Welfare Programme	K83.35m	K85.62m	K80.74m
Child Welfare and Adoption Services	K3.42m	K1.08m	K2.20m
Share of Social Welfare Programme	4.1%	1.3%	2.7%

Source: Author's own calculations based on the Yellow Books (2025 approved, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates, Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services). Shares are calculated from unrounded allocations.

Decentralisation changes where resources are managed and how services must be coordinated. District Social Welfare and Counselling is devolved to local government, with its K7.90 million allocation moving from Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to Head 20: Intergovernmental Transfers. While this specific allocation is identifiable, the wider financing of devolved child protection services remains difficult to assess across central and local government budgets.

The priority is to consolidate these investments into a reliable continuum of prevention, case management, alternative care and family reintegration. **Government should link financing to service needs and delivery costs, while ensuring predictable transfers and clear accountability for devolved functions.** This would help turn the positive direction in selected allocations into sustained improvements for children and families.

5.2 Frontline capacity: financing the workforce and the means to deliver

The Budget strengthens both personal emoluments and operational support, providing a better foundation for frontline delivery. Personal emoluments under the Social Welfare Programme rise by 9.3%, from K10.82 million to K11.83 million. Goods and services increases from K2.06 million to K4.58 million, providing additional scope for outreach, transport, referrals and case follow-up. The delivery benefit will depend on how these resources support staff where protection needs and caseloads are greatest.

The planned training of **1,575 frontline workers in INSPIRE strategies** supports a stronger prevention function: equipping workers to prevent and respond to violence against children, support families and coordinate referrals. The proposed Child Information Management System, linked to the National Social Registry, can complement this investment by improving case recording, follow-up and coordination across services. Digital case management must support professional practice rather than substitute for trained personnel and direct engagement with children.

These investments underpin commitments to reintegrate 500 children from the streets into families, represent 1,800 juveniles in court, provide diversion services to 1,100 juveniles and support 3,030 survivors of gender-based violence.

The central financing issue is therefore not training alone, but whether districts have sufficient social service workers, supervision, transport, operating resources and referral capacity to manage actual caseloads.

Alongside the Budget, the responsible ministries and local authorities should establish a clear workforce implementation plan. It should specify staffing establishments, vacancies, recruitment and deployment priorities, training, supervision and operational requirements. Linking these commitments to district caseloads and reporting on releases would strengthen accountability for timely, equitable protection services.

5.3 Digitalisation: turning systems investment into accessible legal identity

The K367.80 million allocation to the Integrated National Registration Information System (INRIS) positions digitalisation as a major investment in Zambia's identity infrastructure. Its planned rollout to 17 districts (MoFNP, 2026a) creates an opportunity to improve registration processes, information management and the timely issuance of identity documents. For children, the central test is whether this investment makes birth registration and certification easier to access.

Civil Registration Services receives K9.34 million, only 0.3% above K9.31 million in 2026, while the target

for registering vital events rises from 150,000 to 305,000. The combination of substantial systems investment, limited growth in frontline registration financing and a higher service target makes implementation capacity especially important.

Digital infrastructure and frontline registration should be financed and implemented as a connected service. This requires registration at health facilities, community outreach, trained personnel and reliable links between birth notification, registration and certificate issuance. Families in rural and hard-to-reach communities should benefit from simpler procedures and fewer journeys, rather than face a digital system that remains physically inaccessible.

Government should accompany the INRIS rollout with a costed birth registration implementation plan and distinct targets for registration and certification. Reporting on coverage, timeliness and geographical access would demonstrate whether digitalisation is reducing inequalities in legal identity and strengthening children's access to recognition and protection.



6. Social Protection: Bigger Social Cash Transfers for Better Impact?

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Social Cash Transfer financing expands significantly, with a decisive step towards full domestic funding.** The SCT allocation increases by 35.5% to K10.36 billion, of which 98.8% is Government-financed. However, social protection's share of the national budget falls from 6.2% in 2026 to 5.7% in 2027, compared with 7.4% in 2025, highlighting a growing concentration of resources within the function.

2. **Higher transfer levels and expanded coverage strengthen income protection, but the next step is to connect assistance with better services.** Monthly transfers increase by K50 per household, while the proposed integration of health insurance contributions into SCT offers an important opportunity to reduce healthcare costs for vulnerable households. Clear financing arrangements are needed to ensure that health coverage expands without reduc ing cash entitlements.

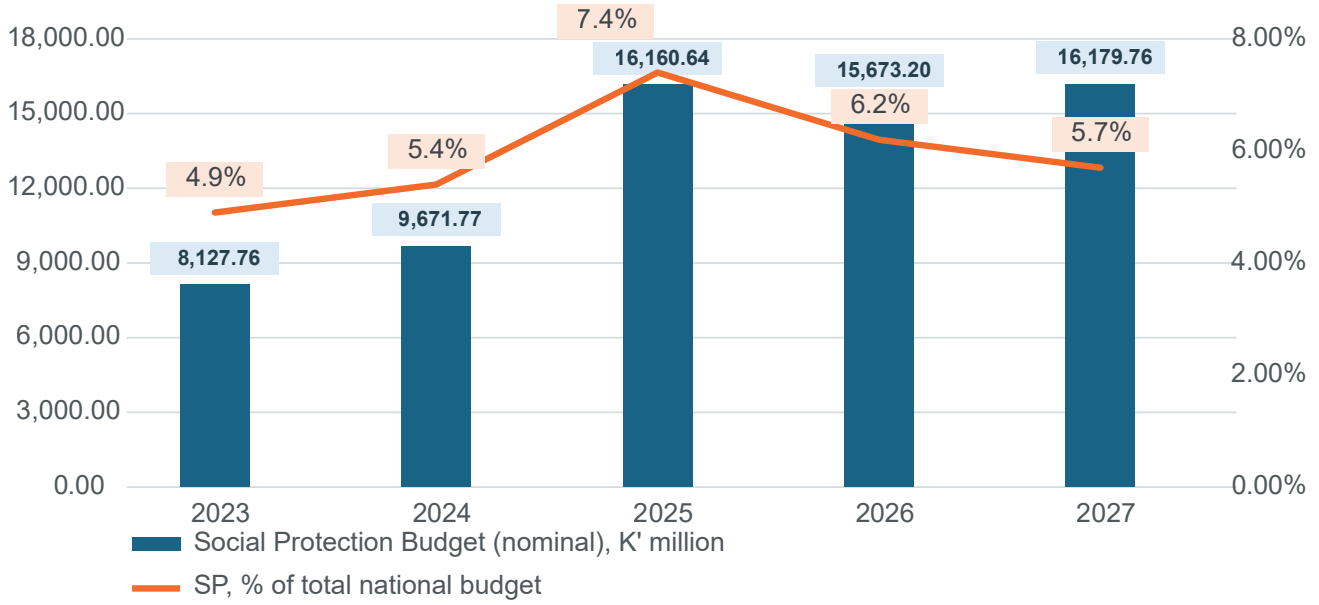
3. **Complementary livelihood support and shock preparedness require greater attention.** The Supporting Women's Livelihoods allocation declines by 45.7%, while the Food Security Pack and Cash for Work programme have no separately identifiable 2027 allocation. The absence of a dedicated Emergency Social Cash Transfer provision also raises questions about how the system will respond to anticipated climate and food-security shocks.
4. **Beyond cash transfers, stronger integration with services is needed.** The longer-term objective should be a more integrated Cash Plus approach, connecting predictable income support with health, nutrition, education, child protection, livelihoods and other services according to household needs.

6.1 Financing direction: stronger cash transfers within a declining budget share

The 2027 Budget strengthens poverty-targeted income support, although the relative fiscal priority of the broader social protection function declines. The functional allocation increases by 3.2%, from K15.67 billion to K16.18 billion, below the projected inflation range of 6–8%. Its share of the national budget falls from 6.2% to 5.7%, a further drop from 7.4% in 2025. Within the 2027 allocation, K10.36 billion is provided for SCT and approximately K5.25 billion for public service pensions. Together, these account for about 96.5% of the social protection function, leaving limited fiscal space for other interventions.

The most significant development is the continued transition towards nearly full domestic financing of SCT. The programme allocation rises by 35.5%, from K7.65 billion in 2026 to K10.36 billion in 2027. Government financing increases to K10.23 billion, representing 98.8% of the allocation, compared with 88.1% in 2026. World Bank grant financing consequently falls from K910.00 million to K129.00 million.

Figure 3: Social protection allocation and share of the national budget, 2023 - 2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Budget Speech and the Yellow Books (social protection functional allocation and share of the national budget, 2025, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates).

The 2027 Budget strengthens poverty-targeted income support, although the relative fiscal priority of the broader social protection function declines. The functional allocation increases by 3.2%, from K15.67 billion to K16.18 billion, below the projected inflation range of 6–8%. Its share of the national budget falls from 6.2% to 5.7%, a further drop from 7.4% in 2025. Within the 2027 allocation, K10.36 billion is provided for SCT and approximately K5.25 billion for public service pensions. Together, these account for about 96.5% of the social protection function, leaving limited fiscal space for other interventions.

This transition strengthens national ownership at a time of changing global development financing. However, sustainability depends on more than replacing external resources. **Government should protect predictable releases and maintain adequate transfer values and coverage,** ensuring that greater domestic responsibility translates into reliable support for vulnerable households.

6.2 Expanding cash transfers: protecting purchasing power and access to healthcare

The 2027 Budget expands SCT coverage and transfer values, providing additional support to households facing persistent poverty and rising living costs. The programme will target expansion to 1,639,034 households, approximately 5.3% above the 1,555,840 households reported as reached by June 2026.

Monthly payments increase from K400 to K450 for regular beneficiaries and from K600 to K650 for households with eligible persons with disabilities. These represent increases of 12.5% and 8.3%, respectively. Both exceed the 6–8% inflation target, although the real improvement is modest, particularly for households with additional disability-related costs. Proposed consumption taxes and mobile money levies could potentially offset part of these increases, affecting the purchasing power of low-income households to meet essential needs and maintain an adequate standard of living.

The planned integration of National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) contributions into SCT represents an important step towards more comprehensive social protection. The approach builds on

existing collaboration between the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services and the National Health Insurance Management Authority (NHIMA). By November 2025, Government reported that 60,704 SCT beneficiaries had been enrolled in subsidised health insurance through Global Fund support (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2025b).

Under Head 46: Ministry of Health, the 2027 Budget provides K365.40 million in transfers to the National Health Insurance Management Authority (NHIMA), compared with K5.20 million in 2026. While this represents a substantial increase in public financing, the allocation is not explicitly earmarked for SCT beneficiaries and must also be considered alongside NHIMA's existing financial obligations. At an illustrative contribution of K50 per household per month for NHIS, extending coverage to all 1.64 million targeted SCT households would require approximately K983.42 million annually. This highlights the need for a clearly costed and sustainable financing arrangement to expand health insurance coverage without reducing beneficiaries' cash entitlements.

Government should establish a costed financing and implementation framework for SCT–NHIS integration, specifying coverage targets, financing responsibilities and payment arrangements. Importantly, health insurance contributions should supplement rather than reduce beneficiaries' cash entitlements.

6.3 Beyond cash transfers: sustaining livelihoods and complementary support

The expansion of SCT contrasts with declining allocations for complementary livelihood interventions. Under **Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services,** the total allocation increases by 10.8% to K10.74 billion, with SCT accounting for 96.5%

.

The Community Development Programme declines from K1.87 billion to K199.10 million, **largely reflecting the removal of the separately identified K1.51 billion Food Security Pack allocation**. Government intends to integrate the programme into other social protection interventions, but the 2027 financing and delivery arrangements are not separately identified.

The Cash for Work programme also has no separately identifiable allocation in the 2027 Budget, despite being used in 2026 to support households affected by economic and climate shocks. It is unclear whether the programme has been discontinued, integrated into another programme or will be financed through another mechanism. Clarifying its financing will be important given anticipated climate risks.

Similarly, **the Supporting Women's Livelihoods allocation falls by 45.7%, from K326.00 million to K177.10 million.** The programme provides complementary support through skills development, productivity grants and mentoring, helping women in vulnerable households strengthen their income-generating activities.

These changes raise questions about the balance between income protection and opportunities for economic inclusion. Government should clarify how Food Security Pack and Cash for Work support will be maintained and protect financing for complementary livelihood interventions, particularly for households with productive potential.

At the same time, livelihood programmes should not be treated as substitutes for long-term social assistance. Older persons, persons with severe disabilities and households facing persistent barriers to employment require predictable income protection rather than graduation targets that may not reflect their circumstances.

6.4 Strengthening delivery systems and shock responsiveness

The expansion of SCT creates an opportunity to strengthen the wider social protection system, but effective delivery requires investment beyond direct transfers.
The planned operationalisation of the National Social Registry in 2027 could improve beneficiary identification, coordination and programme integration. Its effectiveness will depend on updated household information, reliable payment systems, grievance mechanisms and adequate district-level operational capacity. This is particularly important as social welfare functions are increasingly devolved. Public Welfare Assistance and Care for Older Persons are among the services financed through **Head 20: Intergovernmental Transfers,** requiring coordination between central government and local authorities.

Shock-response financing remains insufficiently explicit. Under Head 45, the Emergency Social Cash Transfer line has no allocation in either 2026 or 2027, compared with K1.87 billion in 2025. DRMD's programme narrative includes emergency cash transfers but does not separately quantify them. Government should clarify the financing and release arrangements for expanding SCT coverage or temporarily increasing benefits during shocks. The anticipated El Niño-related drought risk reinforces the importance of preparedness. Zambia's existing social protection system has demonstrated the capacity to deliver emergency assistance, including through the drought response, but future scale-up requires predictable financing and clear activation arrangements.

Government should establish a costed shock-response mechanism within SCT, specifying triggers, temporary benefit adjustments, additional coverage and financing arrangements. This should be supported by timely releases and adequate frontline staffing to ensure that regular payments are not disrupted during emergencies.



7. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): No Growth Without Water Security

KEY MESSAGES

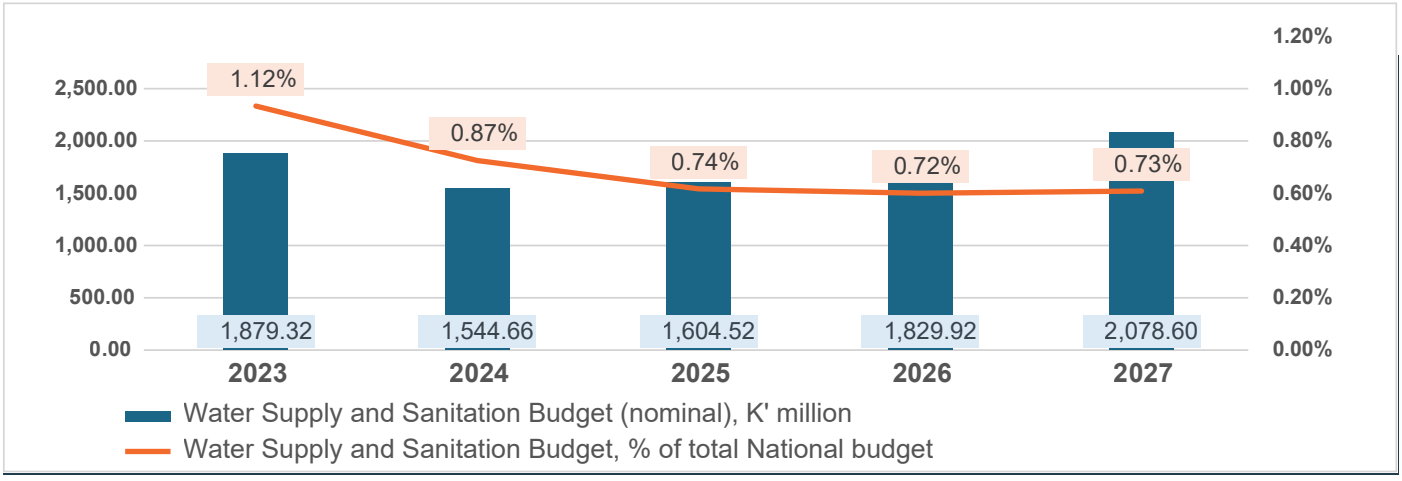
1. **Water security gains prominence, but WASH financing remains below 1.0% of the national budget and may not keep pace with expanded expectations.** Head 52: Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation increases by **12.6% to K3.03 billion,** and the WSS programme by **13.6% to K2.08 billion.** However, WSS's share of the national budget has fallen from **1.12% in 2023 to 0.73% in 2027,** and its allocation is only 10.6% above its 2023 level in nominal terms. Additional financing is needed to support growth without crowding out WASH for human capital, essential services and climate resilience.

2. **Higher investment must close the infrastructure-to-service gap. Of the K3.03 billion allocation, approximately K2.61 billion (86.1%) is for non-financial assets,** confirming that the sector remains highly capital-intensive. With persistent functionality gaps, high sanitation deprivation, the ongoing cholera outbreak and anticipated El Niño pressures, Government should complement capital investment with adequate and predictable financing for operations, maintenance, rehabilitation and climate resilience to sustain service continuity.

3. **Utility support must improve efficiency, service quality and protect affordability.** Transfers to commercial utilities increase by **85.0% to K207.91 million.** Public support should be linked to reduced water losses, improved operations and maintenance, and service continuity, While protecting vulnerable households.

4. **Tax changes should not raise the cost of climate-resilient WASH.** Removing VAT zero-rating on energy-saving appliances may increase investment costs for energy-efficient pump ing and treatment technologies where these fall within the affected categories. Implementation should protect **WASH energy-efficiency investments that reduce operating costs and strengthen service continuity.**

Figure 4: Water Supply and Sanitation programme allocation and share of the national budget, 2023–2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2025 and 2027 Yellow Books (Head 52, Water Supply and Sanitation programme allocation, 2023–2026 approved and 2027 estimates) and national budget totals from the annual Budget Speeches and the 2027 Yellow Book.

7.1 Financing direction: connecting water security to service delivery

The 2027 Budget positions water security as a foundation for growth, while WSS is the Ministry's largest programme. WSS increases by 13.6%, from K1.83 billion in 2026 to K2.08 billion in 2027, slightly faster than the 12.5% growth in the national budget. However, as the graph shows, its share of the national budget fell from 1.12% in 2023 to 0.74% in 2025 and has stayed between 0.72% and 0.74% since, as earlier increases did not keep pace with overall budget growth. Within the programme, sanitation has increased by 45.5% since 2023, from K579.28 million to K843.11 million, while water supply, at K1.24 billion, remains 5.0% below its 2023 level of K1.30 billion, a concern ahead of anticipated El Niño-related water shortages. As Government expands investments in dams, groundwater development, and catchment restoration to agriculture, mining, manufacturing and energy, the overall Head 52 envelope should increase so that these water security ambitions are additional to, rather than at the expense of, WASH financing for human capital, essential services and El Niño resilience.

Table 4: Head 52 allocations by programme, 2026 and 2027

Allocation under Head 52	2026 approved	2027 estimate	Nominal change
Water Resource Management and Development	K805.43m	K888.34m	+10.3%
Water Supply and Sanitation	K1,829.92m	K2,078.60m	+13.6%
• Sanitation	K735.04m	K843.11m	+14.7%
• Water Supply	K1,094.88m	K1,235.49m	+12.8%
Ministry total, including management and support	**K2,688.54m**	**K3,027.35m**	**+12.6%**

Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (2026 approved allocations and 2027 estimates, Head 52: Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation). Nominal changes are calculated from unrounded figures.

The allocation reflects two complementary priorities: securing the water resource and expanding services. **K888.34 million (29.3%) goes to Water Resources Management and Development,** including K721.40 million for dams, K69.20 million for catchment protection and K81.50 million for groundwater development, **while K2.08 billion (68.7%) goes to WSS, including K1.24 billion for water supply and K843.11 million for sanitation.**

However, the 2027 financing envelope does not yet reflect the additional water requirements of the expanded growth agenda. As agriculture, mining, manufacturing and energy increase demand, Government should assess the additional water requirements arising from the Grow Zambia Agenda and reflect these in medium-term financing plans, while protecting allocations for essential WASH services, human capital and climate resilience.

7.2 From infrastructure to reliable services

The budget remains strongly capital-intensive, reinforcing the need to close the infrastructure-to-service gap. Assets account for 86.1% of Head 52, transfers for 11.0% and goods and services for 1.7%. The latter is not a complete measure of operations and maintenance: transfers support utilities, while capital allocations include rehabilitation. The requirement is therefore to make lifecycle costs

visible across financing channels, rather than assume all operational support sits in one classification.

The output targets warrant scrutiny. Household water connections fall from 20,000 to 5,000; sewer connections from 1,000 to 500; and borehole rehabilitation from 500 to 150. The water-supply-hours target falls from 19 to 16 hours daily. These targets do not imply an actual decline in services, but they underline that higher capital spending alone will not guarantee expanded or more reliable access.

External financing is also significant, with identified loans and grants total **K935.36 million, equivalent to 45.0% of the WSS Programme.** At the same time, r**emoving the VAT zero-rating on energy-saving appliances could increase the cost of energy-efficient pumping and treatment,** potentially raising lifecycle costs when utilities already face energy and service-continuity pressures. Government should protect **O&M, rehabilitation, water quality and energy-efficiency investments,** while ensuring timely releases and implementation so infrastructure remains functional through El Niño and other shocks.

7.3 Protecting children and communities through preparedness

The budget provides a stronger foundation for preparedness through investment in water-security and sanitation, but the anticipated El Niño and ongoing cholera outbreak require a stronger focus on **preventing service disruption before shocks intensify.** The previous El Niño period coincided with a cholera outbreak of more than **23,000 cases and 740 deaths,** demonstrating how water scarcity, intermittent supply, energy disruptions and constrained hygiene can amplify existing WASH and public-health risks. With K**843.11 million allocated to sanitation,** the priority is therefore not only the level of financing, but whether it really addresses reliable water, hygiene and sanitation, particularly in cholera hotspots, peri-urban settlements and rapidly growing centres.

Preparedness should also be geographically targeted. Economic corridors, mining, agriculture and industry will increase water demand and accelerate settlement growth, but financing should respond to both existing deprivation and emerging demand, ensuring vulnerable communities, schools and health facilities are not left behind. **Government should therefore front-load preventive WASH investments through a costed, risk-informed preparedness plan** linking drought, flood and outbreak risks to priority locations, agreed triggers, pre-arranged financing and timely releases for rehabilitation, safe storage, reliable pumping, water treatment and quality monitoring, sanitation, hygiene and rapid repairs.

7.4 Utility sustainability: finance better performance without transferring inefficiency to households

Higher public support provides an opportunity to strengthen utility performance and regulation. Transfers to Commercial Utilities rise by 85.0%, from K112.41 million to K207.91 million, while the transfer to the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) increases from K10.35 million to K12.35 million, or 19.3%. Yet the 2027 non-revenue water (NRW) target remains high at 53.0%, compared with 50.0% in 2026, indicating that substantial losses remain embedded in the delivery outlook.

The additional regulatory financing is timely as the Water Supply and Sanitation Services Act, 2026 (Government of Zambia, 2026b), Cost of Service Study and tariff applications strengthen the sector's regulatory framework. **Public transfers and any tariff adjustments should therefore be linked to measurable improvements in NRW, collection efficiency, operation and maintenance, water quality and service continuity,** while the increased NWASCO allocation should strengthen **performance oversight, tariff regulation and consumer protection.** A balanced financing approach should combine tariffs, domestic tax-funded support and external transfers, with affordability support targeted to vulnerable

households rather than public resources routinely absorbing avoidable inefficiencies.

Water security will support growth only when investment translates into dependable services. The central test is whether higher financing improves continuity, protects essential institutions and extends affordable access to underserved communities.



8. Disability: Financing Inclusion and Equal Participation

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Disability-related financing increases, but identifiable investment in inclusion services remains limited.** The estimated disability financing envelope rises by 32.8% to K1.11 billion, based on attributing 10% of total SCT spending to disability. Separately identifiable allocations for Disability Affairs and special education grants increase by 5.1% to K77.11 million.

2. **Institutional and education financing must support practical improvements in inclusion.** Disability Affairs declines slightly, while special education grants increase by 10.7%. These allocations need to translate into accessible services, appropriate learning support and stronger assessment and referral systems, thereby strengthening equitable access to education and other essential services for persons with disabilities.

3. **The policy framework provides a clear basis for accountability.** The 2025 National Policy on Persons with Disabilities requires adequate budgeting, accessible schools, appropriate materials and sufficient teaching personnel. Financing should demonstrate how these commitments are being implemented, alongside support for assistive products and rehabilitation, in line with Zambia's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

8.1 Financing direction: income support expands faster than services

The 2027 financing picture is positive for income support, but more limited for services that remove barriers to participation. Selected allocations under **Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services** and **Head 80: Ministry of Education increase from K73.38 million to K77.11 million, or 5.1%.** These comprise Disability Affairs and two special education grant lines.

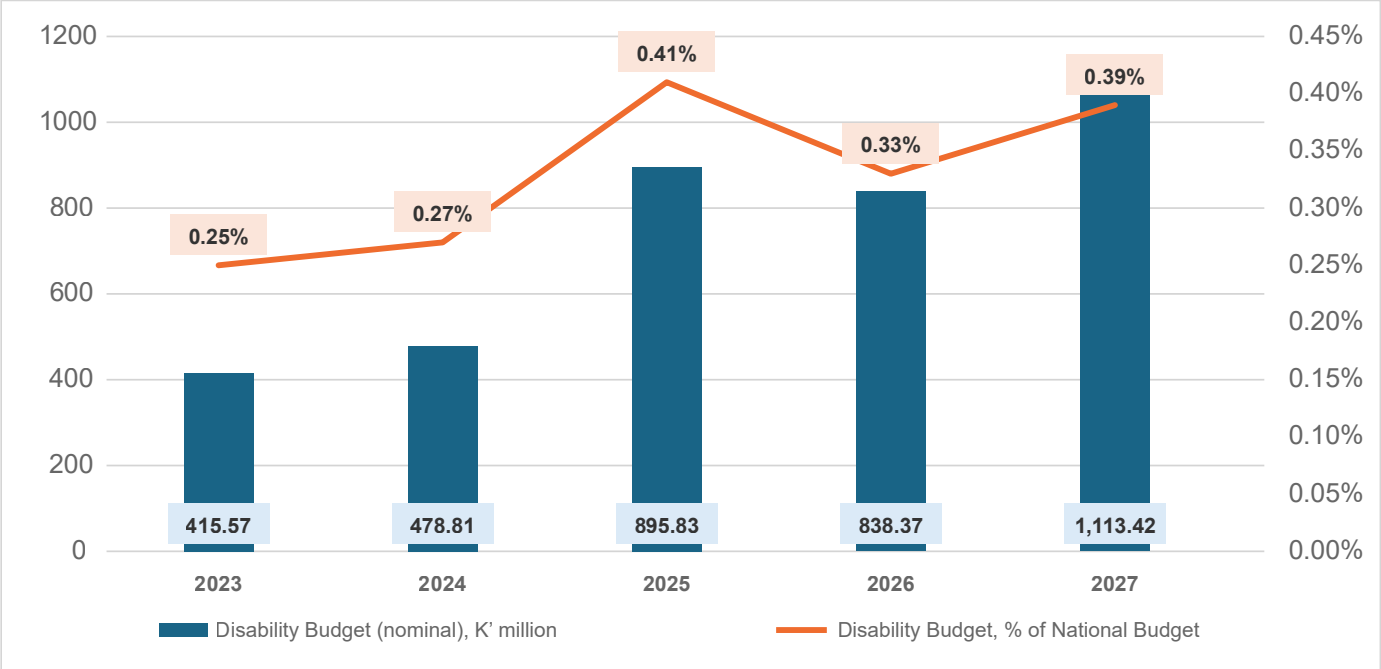
The wider disability financing estimate increases from K838.37 million to K1.11 billion when 10% of total SCT spending is attributed to disability in both years. On this basis, cash transfers account for 93.1% of the estimated envelope and 98.6% of its increase. **This is an analytical estimate, not a separately earmarked disability allocation.**

The distinction matters because a fixed share of SCT does not establish actual expenditure on households with eligible persons with disabilities. **Government should report disability-related SCT coverage and expenditure separately,** enabling assessment of the resources reaching these households and how income support responds to disability-related costs.

8.2 Disability services: connect institutional financing with implementation

Institutional financing changes little despite continuing responsibilities for registration, accessibility and support. Within Disability Affairs, the transfer to the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) increases by approximately 0.6%, from K23.96 million to K24.09 million. The programme targets registration of 12,000 persons with disabilities in 2027.

Figure 5: Estimated disability-related financing, 2023 - 2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services and Head 80: Ministry of Education, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates). The wider estimate attributes 10% of total Social Cash Transfer spending to disability in both years.

Registration should connect people with assessment, referrals and services, rather than operate as an administrative endpoint. For children and families, its value depends on whether it improves access to education, healthcare, rehabilitation and social protection.

The Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Act, 2026 (Government of Zambia, 2026a) revises the agency's board composition and governance arrangements. These are institutional reforms, rather than a new service-financing package. The broader implementation agenda comes from the 2025 National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2025a), which identifies insufficient budgetary support, weak coordination and barriers to services as persistent challenges.

Government should link institutional allocations to a costed delivery plan, specifying operational requirements and measurable commitments for assessment, registration, accessibility inspections and referrals. Reporting should demonstrate whether these activities improve access, particularly in underserved communities.

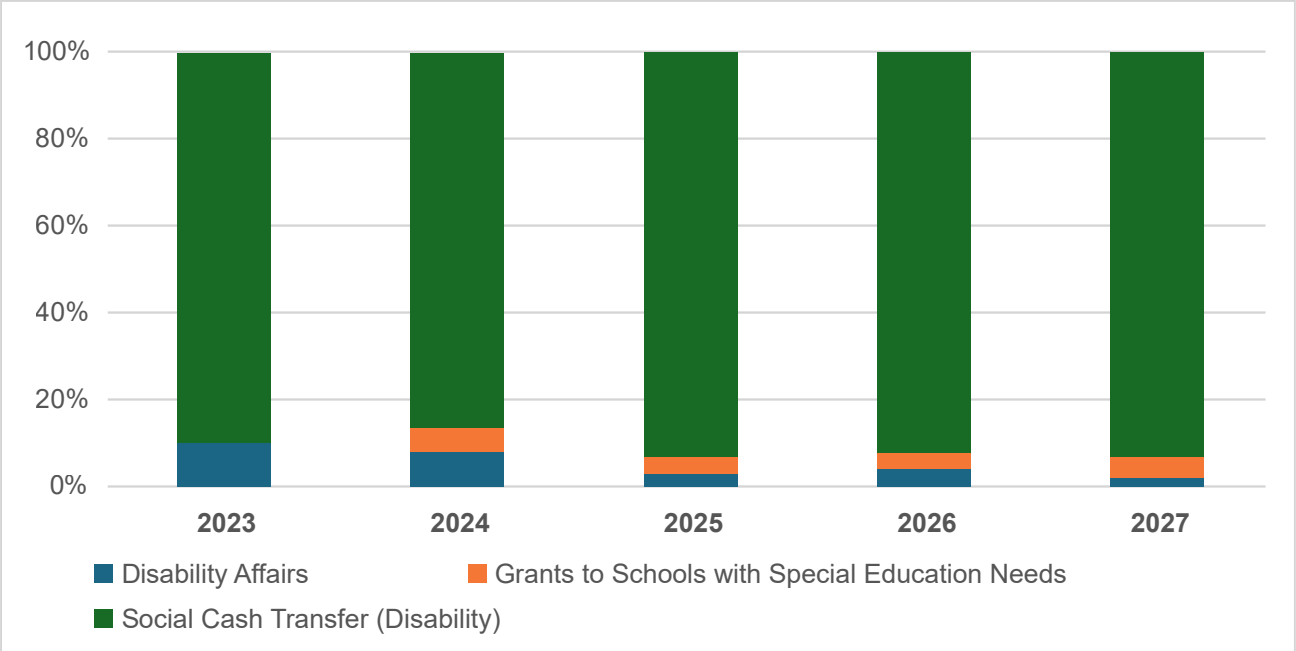
8.3 Inclusive education: finance the support that enables participation

Special education grants increase but grants alone do not establish whether schools can meet learners' needs. The primary and secondary grant lines together rise from K37.29 million to K41.29 million, an increase of 10.7%. These are identifiable provisions within Head 80, rather than a comprehensive measure of inclusive education expenditure.

The 2025 National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2025a) assigns the ministry responsible for education clear responsibilities: accessible schools and training institutions, appropriate educational materials, adequate teaching personnel, sufficient

budgeting and mainstreaming disability. Sections 22 and 23 of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2012 (Government of Zambia, 2012) also provide for inclusive education, reasonable accommodation, individualised support and appropriate facilities and equipment.

Figure 6: Disability-related institutional and education allocations, 2023 - 2027



Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (Head 45: Ministry of Community Development and Social Services a nd Head 80: Ministry of Education, 2026 approved and 2027 estimates).

The Ministry of Education should accompany grants with a costed inclusive education implementation plan. This should identify financing for teacher support, adapted materials, accessible infrastructure, assessment and reasonable accommodation. Reporting on learner participation and the availability of these inputs would show whether increased allocations are improving inclusion and the realisation of the right to education for learners with disabilities, rather than only maintaining existing provision.

8.4 Assistive products and rehabilitation: finance the complete service pathway

Cash transfers and education grants must be complemented by assistive products and rehabilitation. The 2025 National Policy on Persons with Disabilities identifies inadequate budgetary allocations for assistive technology and cites the 2015 survey finding that about 80% of persons with disabilities did not use assistive devices (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2025a). This is a historical measure of use, not a current estimate of unmet need.

For children who require assistive support, effective provision involves assessment, an appropriate product, fitting, maintenance and follow-up. These services connect health, education and social protection: a device alone may not enable equal participation and the full enjoyment of rights without accessible facilities and support at school and home.

Government should make financing for assistive products and rehabilitation identifiable across the responsible sectors, with procurement, coverage and service targets. This would clarify the support available and strengthen accountability for the practical barriers children face.

The central challenge is to turn stronger income protection into broader inclusion. Predictable household support must be accompanied by adequately financed institutions, accessible services and the adjustments that enable children with disabilities to learn, develop and participate, on an equal basis with others, supporting the realisation of their rights and full inclusion in society.



9. Climate and Shock Resilience: From Emergency Response to Anticipatory Action and Household Resilience

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Disaster financing increases, but the dedicated preparedness allocation declines.** DRMD receives K316.53 million (up by 288.7%), while Early Warning and Prepared ness falls by 23.6% to K2.86 million. Central contingency rises to K1.37 billion but covers unfore seen expenditure across government and is not exclusively earmarked for climate-related shocks.

2. **Social protection provides a stronger platform for shock response, but financ ing for emergency expansion remains unclear.** Social Cash Transfer (SCT) expands to 1.64 million households, with 98.8% financed domestically. However, the Emergency Social Cash Transfer under Head 45 has no allocation in 2027, leaving financing arrangements for emergency expansion insufficiently explicit.

3. **Climate resilience requires protecting household incomes and essential ser vices before shocks intensify.** Anticipated drought, food insecurity and cholera risks under score the importance of predictable financing for food assistance, health, nutrition and WASH, particularly in vulnerable districts

9.1 Disaster financing: increased resources , but preparedness needs greater visibility

The 2027 Budget substantially increases disaster financing against a backdrop of heightened climate and food-security risks. The Zambia Meteorological Department's 2026/27 Seasonal Rainfall Forecast anticipates below-normal rainfall across much of southern and central Zambia, with prolonged dry spells likely between December 2026 and February 2027. Northern areas face risks of excessive rainfall and flooding (Zambia Meteorological Department, 2026).

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity Analysis projects that 1.25 million people will experience Crisis or worse acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between October 2026 and March 2027, compared with approximately 698,000 during April–September 2026 (IPC, 2026). This seasonal deterioration reinforces the need for timely food assistance, nutrition services and livelihood protection.

Table 5: Disaster risk management and contingency provisions, 2026 and 2027

Budget provision	2026 approved	2027 estimate	Change
Disaster Risk Management Division	K81.43m	K316.53m	+288.7%
Central contingency	K571.29m	K1,371.29m	+140.0%
Combined provision	**K652.72m**	**K1,687.82m**	**+158.6%**

Source: Author's own calculations based on the 2027 Yellow Book (2026 approved allocations and 2027 estimates for the Disaster Risk Management Division and central contingency). Percentage changes are calculated from unrounded figures. Comparisons use 2026 approved allocations and 2027 estimate, not the changes against revised 2026 budgets or actual expenditure.

Together, DRMD and central contingency represent approximately 0.6% of the national budget. However, K220.38 million, or 69.6% of DRMD's allocation, comprises grant estimates, while central contingency serves government-wide unforeseen expenditure. These provisions should therefore not be presented as a dedicated or fully domestic climate-response envelope.
Government should make financing for anticipated shocks more explicit, identifying resources for preparedness, response and recovery, alongside clear arrangements for accessing contingency funds.

9.2 Early warning: linking risk information to timely action

Financing trends are uneven across the early-warning chain. DRMD's Early Warning and Preparedness allocation falls by 23.6%, from K3.75 million to K2.86 million, while Meteorological and Weather Services falls by 4.8% to K74.24 million. DRMD also provides K21.50 million for a drought-insurance premium and targets one anticipatory-action readiness alert in 2027.

Broader climate financing increases: the Green Economy and Climate Change programme rises by 71.9% to K989.61 million. However, this programme is not a dedicated anticipatory-action allocation, and its increase does not establish the resources available for early action in high-risk districts.

Government should link readiness alerts and agreed triggers to costed sector actions, responsible agencies and pre-arranged releases. Insurance premiums should be distinguished from potential payouts, whose availability and timing depend on policy terms.

9.3 Household resilience: making social protection shock-responsive

The absence of a separately identifiable Emergency Social Cash Transfer allocation raises questions about financing rapid assistance during shocks. While the regular SCT programme provides an established delivery platform, the 2027 Budget does not specify the financing, activation criteria or temporary benefit adjustments required for emergency expansion. Government should establish pre-arranged shock-response financing linked to early-warning triggers, ensuring that additional support can reach affected households without disrupting regular payments.

9.4 Protecting essential services and household purchasing power

Climate and public-health shocks place simultaneous pressure on household welfare and service delivery. As of 8 November 2026, Zambia had recorded 2,392 cumulative cholera cases and 52 deaths across 25 districts in seven provinces during the 2026/27 outbreak which was declared on 30 September 2026. This underscores the need for predictable financing for preventive WASH services, outbreak preparedness and timely response.

The 2027 estimates allocate K25.00 million to nutrition supplements under Health, K2.08 billion to Water Supply and Sanitation under Head 52, and K1.00 billion to school feeding across ECE, primary and secondary education. These are sector allocations, rather than dedicated emergency provisions; their totals do not establish how much will reach districts facing heightened climate and disease risks.

Household affordability also warrants attention. The proposed VAT increase from 16.0% to 16.5%, higher mobile money levies and additional duties on selected food products could increase costs for vulnerable households, depending on exemptions and price pass-through. These pressures may offset some of the purchasing-power gains associated with easing inflation.

Government should protect essential health, nutrition, education and WASH financing in high-risk districts, supported by early releases and district-level preparedness plans. Assessing the combined effects of climate shocks and revenue measures on vulnerable households would further strengthen the responsiveness of the Budget.

The 2027 Budget provides a stronger foundation for disaster financing and household protection. The central priority is to connect early warning with predictable financing, strengthen shock-responsive social protection and safeguard essential services before anticipated shocks become humanitarian crises.



10. Conclusion

Zambia enters 2027 at an important turning point. Following years of debt distress, economic instability and successive shocks, the country is beginning to see the benefits of macroeconomic stabilisation, debt restructuring and renewed growth. Easing inflation, improved economic prospects and reduced debt-service pressures provide an opportunity to rebuild fiscal space and strengthen investment in human development. The Grow Zambia Agenda signals a shift from economic recovery towards expanding production, creating jobs and improving livelihoods. Yet these gains remain vulnerable to fiscal pressures, domestic borrowing requirements and renewed climate shocks, including the anticipated El Niño. The challenge is to sustain economic recovery while ensuring that growth translates into meaningful improvements in household welfare and essential services.

Economic recovery has not yet translated into a comparable recovery in household well-being. Poverty remains high, with 60.0% of the population living below the poverty line and 6.6 million children experiencing multidimensional poverty, according to analyses based on the 2022 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (ZamStats, 2024; ZamStats and UNICEF, 2024). Despite sustained expansion in social sector financing, significant gaps persist in learning outcomes, nutrition, healthcare, WASH and protection from economic and climate shocks. The 2027 Budget demonstrates continued commitment to social investment, but the modest improvement in its overall share suggests that the transition from expanded coverage to quality services remains unfinished. The changing global financing landscape also places greater responsibility on domestic resources at a time when vulnerable households have limited capacity to absorb additional costs.

The central opportunity is to make human capital development an integral part of Zambia's growth strategy, rather than a competing priority. Investment in children should therefore be understood not simply as social expenditure, but as an essential investment in the human capital, resilience and productivity on which Zambia's future growth depends.

Economic transformation depends on a healthy, educated and resilient population, while stronger social protection and essential services enable households to participate in and benefit from growth. Achieving this will require more than higher allocations: it demands credible budgets, predictable financing, effective institutions and greater accountability for results. Ultimately, Zambia's recovery will be measured by whether economic progress reduces deprivation, strengthens resilience and advances the progressive realisation of economic and social rights.

10.1 Priority policy recommendations

1. **Anchor the Grow Zambia Agenda and Ninth National Development Plan (9NDP) in measurable human-development outcomes.** Complement economic growth and production targets with clear commitments to learning, nutrition, health, poverty reduction and access to essential services, supported by corresponding financing and accountability arrange ments.

2. **Safeguard fiscal space and improve budget credibility.** Translate the benefits of debt restructuring into sustained social investment while managing domestic borrowing and refinancing risks. Strengthen expenditure prioritisation, predictable releases and monitoring to protect essential services from in-year fiscal adjustments.

3. **Strengthen sustainable and equitable domestic financing.** Develop a clearer medium-term financing pathway for essential social services as external financing changes. External financing should be aligned with nationally owned, costed priorities, used to strengthen national systems and catalyse domestic investment rather than create parallel delivery arrange ments. Assess the distributional effects of revenue measures and introduce targeted safeguards to prevent disproportionate burdens on vulnerable households.

4. **Prioritise service quality, equity and results.** Direct financing towards children, communities and districts experiencing the greatest deprivations, while ensuring that invest ments in personnel, infrastructure and digital systems are matched by adequate operational resources and frontline capacity. Strengthen the link between allocations, expenditure and mea surable outcomes for children.

5. **Institutionalise shock-responsive and climate-resilient financing.** Link early-warning systems to pre-arranged financing, strengthen the capacity of social protection to expand during emergencies and protect essential services in climate-affected areas. Shift from predominantly reactive expenditure towards preparedness and prevention.

6. **Strengthen transparency and accountability for public investment.** Improve the identification and tracking of spending on nutrition, disability inclusion, child protec tion and devolved services. Connect budget allocations, releases and expenditure to measurable results, enabling policymakers and communities to assess whether resources are reaching those most in need. Strengthen opportunities for children, adolescents and communities to participate in decisions affecting them and provide feedback on the accessibility and quality of publicly financed services.

The priority for 2027 is to consolidate the gains from economic recovery while ensuring that fiscal decisions, growth policies and public investment work together to reduce poverty, strengthen resilience and deliver lasting improvements in people's lives.

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