



**15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands
Participant Guide**

23-31 July 2025, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe



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INTRODUCTION

Every three years, Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meet at the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) to agree on the programming for the next triennium and consider guidance on a range of ongoing and emerging issues on management of wetlands.

The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) will be held in person at Elephant Hills Hotel and Resort at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 23 July to 31 July 2025.

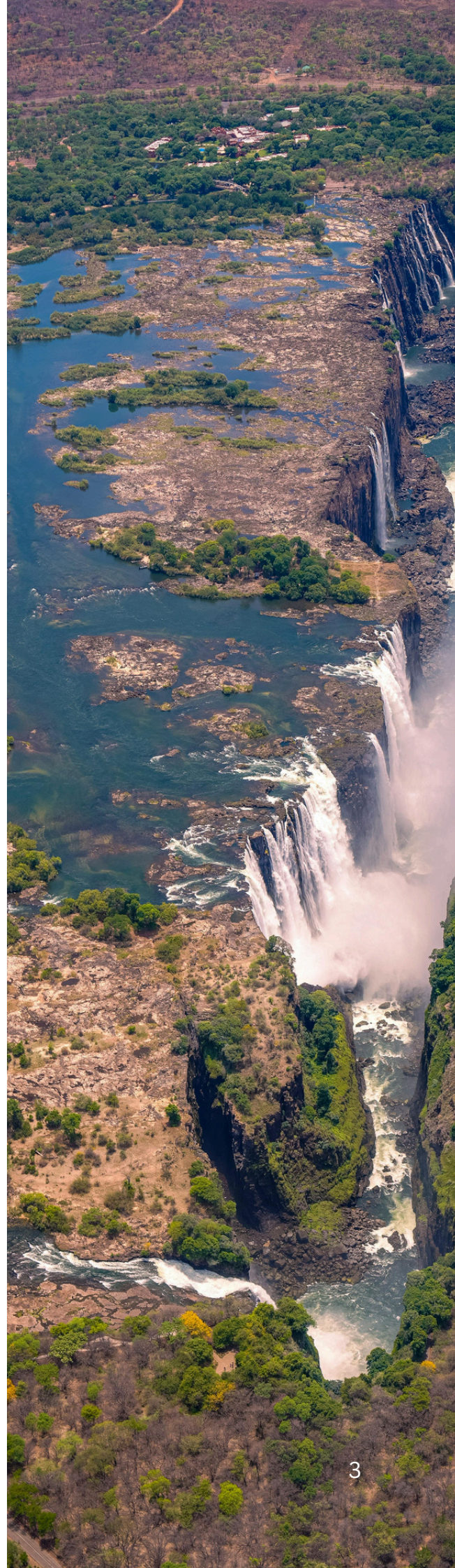
General information to help attendees plan their travel to Victoria Falls and their participation in the conference is provided below.

Participants are encouraged to save a copy of this participant guide to refer to throughout the conference.

As this is a paperless meeting, the present document will be provided in electronic format only.

Additional information can be found on the web page for the conference, at:

www.wetlandscop15.gov.zw and
www.ramsar.org/meeting/15th-meeting-conference-contracting-parties.





ABOUT COP15

One hundred and seventy-two (172) Contracting Parties will convene at COP15 to strengthen international commitments for wetland conservation. COP15 will be held under the theme, “Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future”, which emphasizes the important role wetlands play in sustaining ecological health, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Against the iconic backdrop of Victoria Falls, COP15 will spotlight the value of wetlands and create new avenues for collaborative conservation to protect and restore the wetland ecosystems.

COP15 will facilitate crucial discussions on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, serving as a global platform for advancing wetland conservation, fostering international collaboration, and promoting sustainable practices that protect these vital ecosystems and their benefits.

The theme, “Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future”, resonates with global goals on biodiversity and climate, focusing on wetlands' role in fostering resilience towards the achievement of sustainable development. It emphasizes the critical role that wetlands play in ensuring ecological balance, supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and providing essential resources for human livelihood.



ABOUT ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is a landlocked but land linked country sharing borders with South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique. It has a total area of 390,757 square kilometers. The host town of Victoria Falls is located in Matabeleland North Province and lies on the southern bank of the mighty Zambezi River.

As host to seven Ramsar Sites of International Importance, including the renowned Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe has actively promoted environmental sustainability as a Contracting Party since 2013. Zimbabwe will use the opportunity as host of COP15 to showcase leadership in wetland conservation.

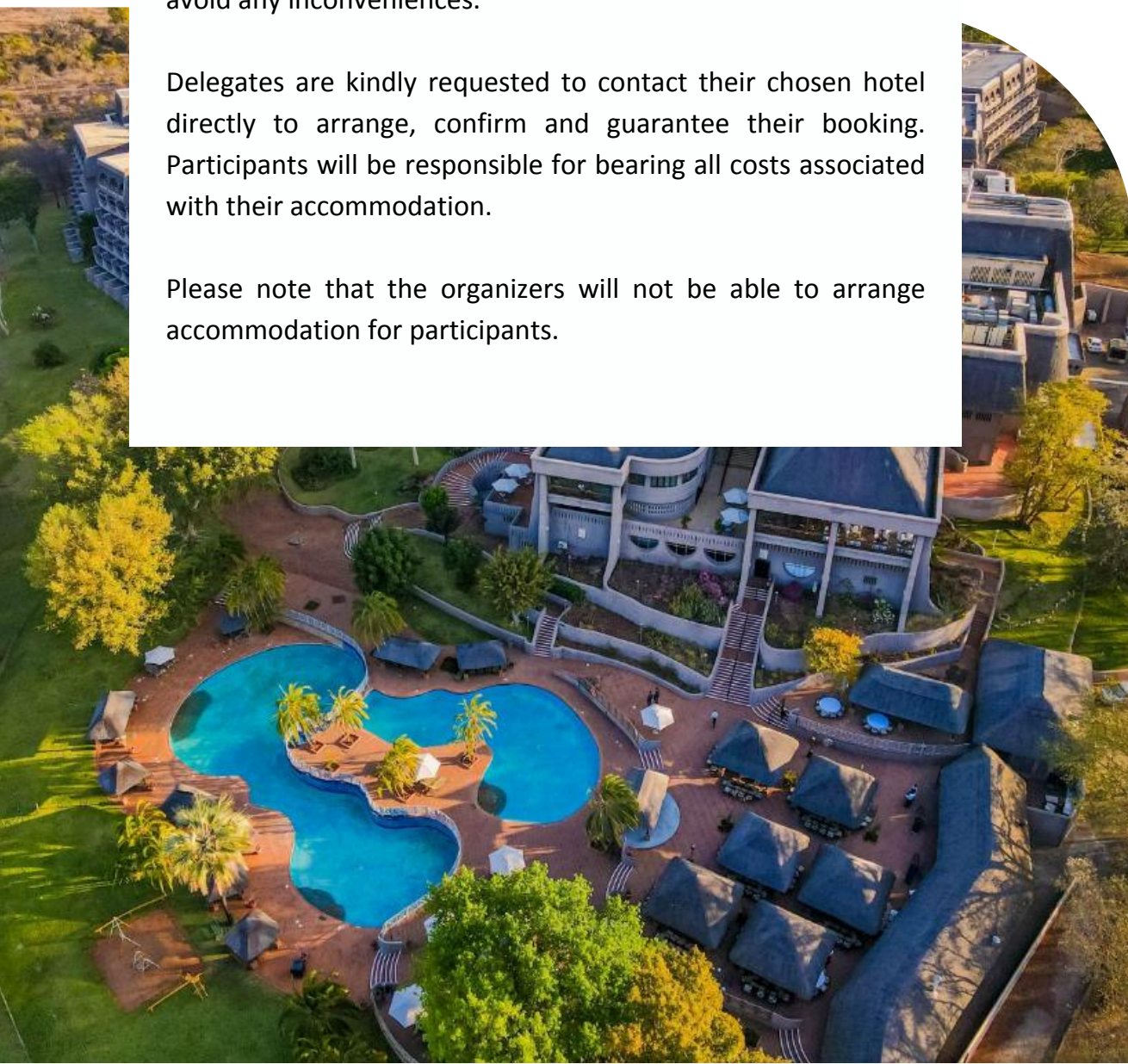
VENUE AND ACCOMMODATION

COP15 will be held at Elephant Hills Hotel and Resort, located on a scenic hill overlooking the Mighty Zambezi River, just 4 km upstream of the famous waterfall. The resort is equipped with advanced conference facilities with additional space provided in temporary structures to accommodate the large number of participants expected.

A list of recommended hotels is available in Annex I. When booking their hotel, delegates should specify that they will be attending the Convention on Wetlands COP15 to be held in Victoria Falls as special rates are available (please refer to hotels listed in Annex I). Early booking is strongly advised to avoid any inconveniences.

Delegates are kindly requested to contact their chosen hotel directly to arrange, confirm and guarantee their booking. Participants will be responsible for bearing all costs associated with their accommodation.

Please note that the organizers will not be able to arrange accommodation for participants.



VISA AND IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS

Delegates must hold a passport that is valid for at least six months from the date of entry into Zimbabwe.

Please check the visa requirements for entering Zimbabwe on the eVisa system website: www.evisa.gov.zw. Visas can be applied for online at the same website.

Zimbabwe has three visa categories. Details on applicable visa categories based on nationality can be found on the eVisa portal:

CATEGORY A: Countries whose nationals do not require visas to enter Zimbabwe.

CATEGORY B: Countries whose nationals are granted visas on arrival on payment of the requisite visa fees.

CATEGORY C: Countries whose nationals are required to apply for and obtain visas prior to travelling.

Delegates from Category B can also apply in advance via the eVisa portal or at a Zimbabwean embassy. Category C delegates are strongly encouraged to apply early to avoid delays.

Should you experience any issues with the eVisa system, please contact Mr H Machona at +263 772899881 or evisazim@gmail.com.



TRANSPORTATION

The host Government will provide a meet-and-greet service at Victoria Falls Airport, where a dedicated conference protocol desk labelled with the conference banner will be clearly visible.

The host Government will provide transport from Victoria Falls Airport to the recommended hotels listed in Annex I.

Shuttle bus services will also be provided to take participants from their hotels to and from the conference venue every day. Please note that if you are not staying at one of the hotels listed in Annex I, you will be responsible for your own daily transport to and from the venue.

Please direct any questions for the COP15 transport committee to naliji09@gmail.com.

REGISTRATION & IDENTIFICATION BADGES

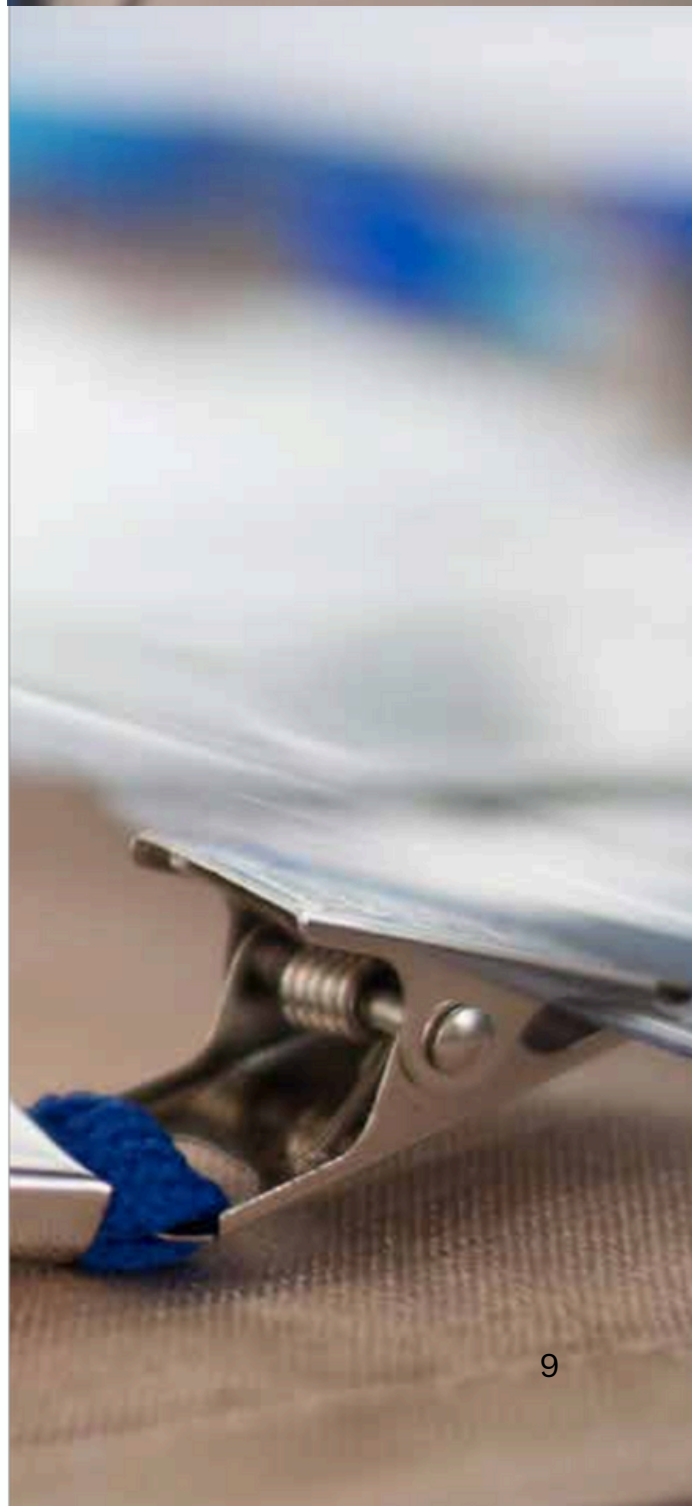
ONLINE REGISTRATION

Conference registration is available at: <https://contacts.ramsar.org/register-cop15>. Delegates are advised to register for the conference as soon as possible, but no later than 30 June 2025, to facilitate the smooth coordination of the issuance of photographic identification badges and the compilation of the list of participants.

Onsite registration will open on 22 July 2025 at the conference venue.

BADGES

For security reasons, you will be required to show a valid badge to gain access to the venue and meeting rooms, and you must wear your badge at all times. You can collect your badge from the registration counter, which will be open from 22 July to 31 July between 8 am and 5 pm. If you lose your badge, please report immediately to the registration counter.



DOCUMENTATION

COP15 is a paperless meeting. Conference documents will be available digitally in the three official languages at <https://www.ramsar.org/meeting/15th-meeting-conference-contracting-parties>. High-speed internet will be available throughout the conference venue to support downloading of documents.

INTERNET

The Wi-Fi password will be communicated to all participants when they reach the venue and will be on display in all areas where participants gather.



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VICTORIA FALLS

Victoria Falls is a small town in the Province of Matabeleland North, in Zimbabwe. The town lies on the southern bank of the Zambezi River, at the western end of the famous waterfall bearing the same name. The town is connected by road and railway to Hwange (109 km away) and Bulawayo (440 km away), both to the south-east. According to the census carried out in 2022, Victoria Falls has a population of over 33,000. Victoria Falls Airport is located 18 km south of the town and has international services to numerous cities in Southern Africa.

The town is a short distance from Mosi-oa-Tunya (meaning “the smoke that thunders”), known worldwide as Victoria Falls, on the Zambezi River. Since the river forms the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Falls are shared by the two countries.

CLIMATE

Zimbabwe has a tropical climate with many local variations. The southern parts of the country are known for their heat and aridity, while parts of the central plateau receive frost in winter. The Zambezi valley is also known for its extreme heat, whereas the eastern highlands have cool temperatures and the highest rainfall in the country. The rainy season generally runs from late October to March. In some areas of the country, the hot climate is moderated by high altitudes.

Zimbabwe experiences winter from May to August, with June and July marking the peak of the winter season. However, Zimbabwe does not experience snow during the winter period. The average temperature in Zimbabwe in the months of June/July ranges from 12–13° C (54–55° F) to 24° C (75° F)

TIME ZONE

Zimbabwe observes Central Africa Time (UTC+2).

LANGUAGES

COP15 will be conducted in English, French and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation in the three languages.

Zimbabwe has 16 official languages. English is widely spoken, and Shona and Ndebele are the main Indigenous languages.



LOCAL CURRENCY/ FOREX

The local currency of Zimbabwe is ZiG\$. However, the following currencies are accepted: United States Dollar, South African Rand, Euro and Botswana Pula.

Please feel free to visit <https://www.rbz.co.zw/> for daily bank exchange rates.

Major credit cards, including American Express, Diners Club, Mastercard and Visa, are accepted in Zimbabwe.

For cash withdrawal ATMs are available at the airport, in town and also at the conference venue.



ELECTRICITY SUPPLY & VOLTAGE

The standard voltage in Zimbabwe is 220-240 volts and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. Power sockets are type G (the standard socket type used in the United Kingdom, which takes plugs with three square pins). An image of this socket type is shown below.

You are advised to bring a plug adaptor and a voltage converter (if warranted) to allow you to charge your devices.

Please note that adaptors will not be provided at the conference venue.



MOBILE NETWORK OPERATORS

Econet, Telecel and NetOne are the three main mobile network operators in Zimbabwe. All three offer prepaid SIM cards. You will need to show your passport when purchasing a SIM card from an authorized store.

Many foreign mobile telephone companies offer roaming services in Zimbabwe.



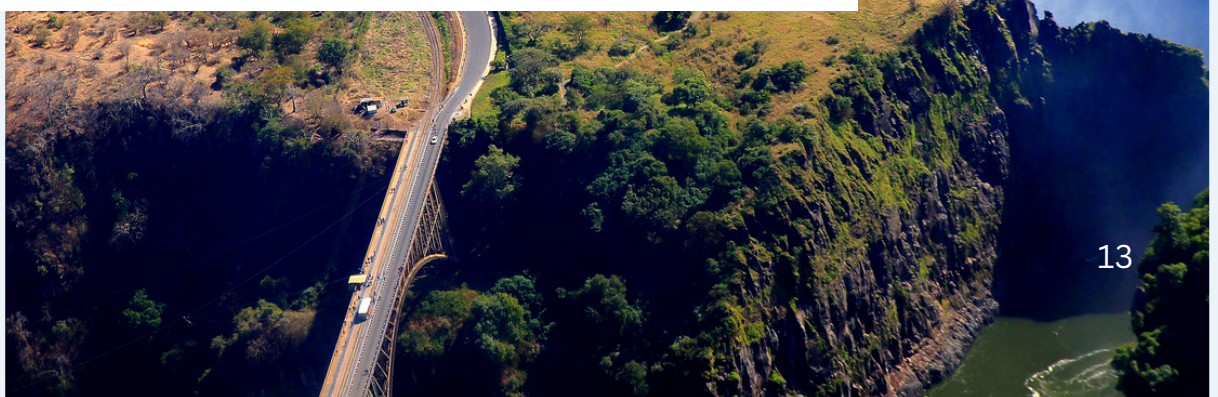
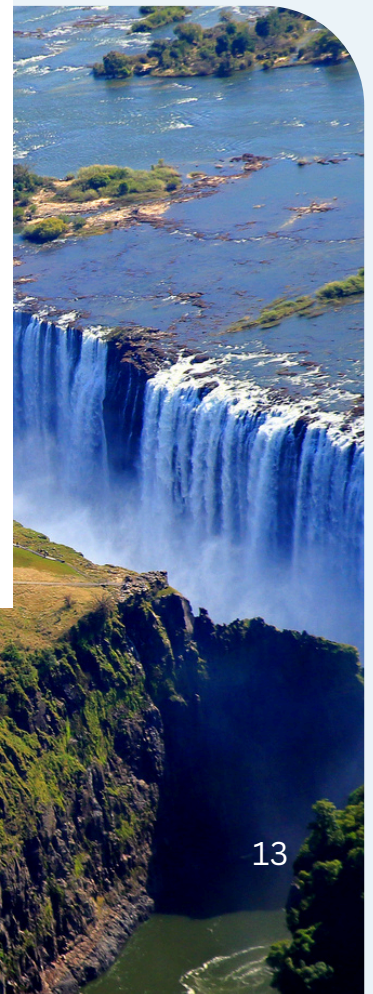
CUSTOMS REQUIREMENTS

To comply with national customs regulations, you should declare all laptops and conference equipment in your possession when you enter Zimbabwe.

TOURISM IN VICTORIA FALLS

Victoria Falls offers a wealth of tourism opportunities, making it the perfect destination to explore beyond the conference. Delegates are encouraged to take advantage of their time in the Tourism Capital and experience its breathtaking scenery, adventure activities, and rich culture.

A complimentary excursion day is scheduled for 29 July during COP15, providing delegates with the chance to discover the beauty and excitement of Victoria Falls.





HEALTHCARE

First aid will be provided free of charge by medical personnel at the conference venue. Participants are advised to update and buy additional travel health insurance that covers health care and emergency evacuation when travelling.

Delegates on medication for chronic conditions should ensure to have packed enough stock for the entire stay in Zimbabwe. Please note that some medication is sold under a different brand in different countries.

The following medical facilities are located in the town of Victoria Falls:

PREMIER CLINIC

413 Clark Road
Zambezi Complex (opposite OK
Supermarket) Victoria Falls
Phone: +263 772 120 270
Contact: Dr. Elwin Finitny
Email: efinitny@psmi.co.zw

THE HEALTH BRIDGE (THB) PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Address: 95 West Drive Victoria Falls,
Zimbabwe
Tel.: +263 83 284 6634/5
Website: www.thehealthbridge.org

VICTORIA FALLS MEDICAL CENTRE

Address: West Drive (next to Medical Air
Rescue Services (MARS))
Tel.: +263 83 284 0529 / 3356

Please ensure that your vaccinations are up to date at least four to six weeks before travelling to Zimbabwe. More information is available at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/zimbabwe>.

Vaccination against yellow fever is required for travelers who have departed or transited through a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission no more than six days before arriving in Zimbabwe. If this is the case, delegates should carry their yellow fever vaccination certificate with the travel documents.

Active cholera transmission is widespread in Zimbabwe, but rare among travelers. Certain factors may increase your risk of contracting and becoming seriously ill from cholera. More information on cholera transmission and vaccination can be found at <https://www.who.int/teams/immunization-vaccines-and-biologicals/diseases/cholera>

Malaria prophylaxis is recommended. More information on malaria prevention can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/preparing/yellow-fever-vaccine-malaria-prevention-by-country/zimbabwe#seldyfm1118>

Traveller diarrhoea is a common disease found almost everywhere. Always maintain proper hand hygiene and eat foods that are hot. Avoid cold dishes as much as possible and eat fruit that can be peeled or washed before consumption.

SECURITY ADVISORY



The Government of Zimbabwe will provide 24-hour security to all very important persons attending the session. All hotels and conference venues will be monitored and guarded by police officers. As is the case in any other tourist resort town, visitors are discouraged from venturing into unlit areas at night. You are strongly encouraged to read the security information provided by your hotel to ensure your personal safety.

Please also be aware that the town of Victoria Falls is surrounded by the Zambezi, Mosi-oa-Tunya and Victoria Falls national parks, which are home to many large wild animals. You are advised to remain security-conscious, stay alert and vigilant, maintain a low profile, avoid going anywhere alone where possible, avoid going out at night, and report any incidents to the security team.

While you are at the conference venue, please ensure that you:

- Wear your conference badge visibly and show it to any authorized person who asks to see it.
- Do not leave bags and parcels unattended, as they may be confiscated or destroyed.
- Do not bring unauthorized persons or children into the conference facilities.
- Look after your valuable property.
- Check that you have taken all your documents and personal items before you leave the
- conference halls and meeting rooms.
- Inform the security and safety services or a security officer on duty if you lose anything valuable.

When you are in your hotel, please abide by the following safety advice:

- Lock your door when entering or leaving your hotel room.
- Before leaving, inspect your room to make sure that no money, jewellery, cameras or other valuables are visible.
- Before you leave your hotel room, deposit valuables and any other important portable items at the reception desk and ask for a receipt or leave them in the safe in your hotel room.
- Should you observe anything suspicious or unusual, please inform the security and safety services or a security officer.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	CONTACT NUMBERS
Zimbabwe State security	+263 712 872 592 +263 773 648 800
Elephant Hills Resort security	+263 777 599 186 +263 772 481 686
Victoria Falls National Park security	+263 83 284 4353 +263 83 284 2294
Fire service	+263 83 284 4400
Ambulance service	+263 83 284 4646 +263 83 284 4764

Annex I

RECOMMENDED HOTELS

Shuttle services to the conference site will be available at all hotels in the annex.

Name	Room types, availability and rates for conference participants per night (United States dollars)	Contact
Elephant Hills Hotel and Resort	USD220 Single	Tel: +263 781707146 Email: reservations@ehr.africansun.co.zw
Victoria Falls Hotel	USD804 Stables Signature Room USD1149 Premier Room USD1237 Deluxe room	Tel: +263 773608944 Email: resoperationsmgr@victoriafallshotel.com
Rainbow Hotel	USD130 Single USD160 Twin	Tel: +263 772 307 130 Email: reservations.vfrh@rtg.co.zw
Victoria Falls Safari	USD202 Clubroom USD246 Club Suite USD150 Standard USD169 Waterhole Facing USD195 Waterhole Suite	Tel: +263 712207381/2 Email: resman@saf lodge.co.zw saf lodge@saf lodge.co.zw
Cresta Sprayview	USD130 Single USD170 Twin	Tel: +263 83 2844344 Email: fom@sprayview.cresta.co.zw
Shearwaters Explorer Village	USD168 standard single USD210 standard double USD208 deluxe single USD260 deluxe double	Tel: +263 832847362 Email: reservations@shearwatervf.com reception@shearwatervf.com
Palm River Hotel	USD504 Single USD354pp sharing	Tel: +263 832844737/8 Email: reservations@palmriverhotel.com

Name	Room types, availability and rates for conference participants per night (United States dollars)	Contact
Insika Lodge	USD160pp sharing standard room USD200pp sharing signature room	Tel : +263 8677009851 Email: res@insikalodge.com
Furusa Lodge		Tel: +263 772694074 Email: info@furusaguesthouse.com
Bhejane Lodge	USD110 standard single USD120 Standard Double USD130 Delux Single USD 140 Delux Double	Tel: +263 774946542 Email: bhejanelodge@gmail.com
Nkosi Guest Lodge	USD190pp sharing superior room USD230 single	Tel: +263 832847321 Email: res@bayeteguestlodge.com
The Shrub Lodge	USD140 Single USD160 Twin USD160 Double	Tel.: +263 788746909 Email: reservations@shrublodge.com
Bishophouse	USD120.00	Tel : +263 788746867 Email: info@bishopshousevicfalls.com
The Victoria Falls Oasis	USD102pp sharing USD133 Single	Tel : +263 780392412 Email: bookings@vicfallsoasis.com
Livingstone Lodge		Tel : +263 782818181 Email: info@livingstonelodge.com
Miombo Mews	2 Bedroom Apartment US\$110 pp NB- Each Apartment can sleep 2 people with own bedroom and bathroom	Tel: +263 789458231 Email: info@miombomews.com

Name	Room types, availability and rates for conference participants per night (United States dollars)	Contact
Shongwe Oasis	USD150pp sharing USD220 single	Tel: +263 832844209 Email: reservations@shongwe-oasis.com
Shongwe Lookout	USD140pp sharing USD200 single	Tel: +263 775298598 Email: reservations@shongwelookout.com
Ilala Lodge	USD438 Single USD307pp sharing	Tel: +263 832844737 Email: reservations@ilalalodge.co.zw
Mopani Lodge	USD115 Single USD125 Double USD140 Deluxe USD240 2 Bed	Tel: +263 789277000 Email: tadiwa@mopani.travel
Kasambabezi Lodge	USD180.00 Single	Tel : +263 716355194 Email: judith@kasambabezilodge.com
Peniel Retreat Centre	USD155 Single USD200 Exec USD160 Twin USD400 Family	Tel : +263 788092361 Email: res@penielvicfalls.com
Batonka Guest Lodge	USD241Single USD185pp sharing Rates subject to change	Tel: +263 717734933 Email: reservations@batonkaguestlodge.com
Amakhosi Hotel	USD150/room	Tel: +263 788533532 Email: res@amakhosivicfalls.com
Victoria Falls Backpackers Lodge		Tel: +263 713575413 Email : info@victoriafallsbackpackers.com

Name	Room types, availability and rates for conference participants per night (United States dollars)	Contact
A'Zambezi River Lodge	USD180 Standard Single USD200 Standard Double	Tel: +263 776306281 Email: reservations.Azambezi@rtg.co.zw
Tabokana House	USD85.00 Single	Tel: +263 784902197 Email: tabokanahouse@gmail.com
The Little Outlook	USD135 Single USD150 Double	Tel: +263 774944129 Email: reservations@theoutlook.co.zw
Kabakwe Lodge	USD150	Tel: +263 780589932 Email: res@kabakwelodge.com
Nguni Lodge	USD99pp sharing	Tel: +263 777468991, +263780589932 Email: reservations@ngunilodge.com