

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Zimbabwe Launches First National Edition of the Future Leaders Challenge
A groundbreaking platform advancing human capital development in the hospitality and tourism industry



Harare, Zimbabwe — 25 August 2025 — Zimbabwe launches its first national edition of the **Future Leaders Challenge (FLC)** today at the Monomotapa Crowne Plaza Hotel in Harare.

Designed as a **strategic platform for human capital development**, the FLC unites top leaders from government, academia, and industry with the country's brightest student talent to co-create solutions for the future of hospitality and tourism.

This one-day event marks a milestone for Zimbabwe, as eight universities and colleges compete for the chance to represent the country at the Global Finals in Dubai in 2026.

The challenge question for this year:

"How can tourism and hospitality establishments in Zimbabwe implement futuristic sustainable practices to minimize their environmental impact?"

The winning team will secure a **fully sponsored opportunity to represent Zimbabwe at the 2026 Global Future Leaders Challenge in Dubai**, showcasing their ideas on a world stage.

Inspiring the Next Generation

The Zimbabwe edition of the Future Leaders Challenge is more than a competition, it is a **one-day journey of learning, mentorship, and inspiration**. Students will attend workshops, join a job market fair, and take part in networking sessions designed to help them take their first steps into the hospitality and tourism industry.

Built on the principle of *community over competition*, the Challenge ensures that while one team will represent Zimbabwe globally, every participant leaves with new insights, professional connections, and inspiration for their future career.

“Zimbabwe has an incredibly vibrant young talent pool, and this Challenge gives them the chance to demonstrate their creativity and vision on a global stage,” said **Hubert Ummels**, Founder of the GameChangers and Future Leaders Platform.

“The MEA Future Leaders Challenge allows us the unique opportunity to inspire the next generation of hospitality professionals and establish the region as a catalyst for cultivating a highly skilled hospitality and tourism workforce.”

“This initiative reflects Zimbabwe’s commitment to empowering our youth and strengthening the country’s role as a future hub for sustainable tourism,” said **Luckson Zambuko**, Co-Founder of the African Youth in Tourism and Hospitality Association and Member of the FLC Zimbabwe Strategic Board.

Programme Overview

Throughout the one-day event, students will participate in:

- **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
- **Inspirational Talks & Workshops** by *Jillian Blackbeard (Africa’s Eden)*, *Christopher Sithole (Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe)*, and *Sibo Muteyiwa (POTRAZ)*
- **Job Market Fair & Walking Networking Lunch**
- **Student Semifinal & Final Presentations**
- **Winner Announcement & Closing Remarks**



Guided by National Leadership

The Zimbabwe edition is guided by a distinguished **Strategic Board** of leaders from across hospitality, tourism, and government, ensuring alignment with national priorities and industry needs.

Strategic Board Members:

- **Hubert Ummels** — Founder, GameChangers and Future Leaders Platform
- **Ivan Kasozi** — Group Operations Executive, Cresta Hotels
- **Luckson Zambuko** — Co-Founder, African Youth in Tourism and Hospitality Association
- **Emmah Kativu** — Vice President, Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe
- **Ropafadzaishe Mushoorwa** — General Manager, Ancient City Lodge
- **Precious Sibiya** — Vice Board Chairperson, Air Zimbabwe
- **Kelvin Bako** — Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality

Government and Industry Cross-Collaboration

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality, and leading private sector stakeholders are working closely with academia and industry leaders to shape the Challenge. Their collaboration helps align academic training with workforce needs, strengthen the talent pipeline, and ensure that hospitality and tourism continues to be a driver of Zimbabwe's economic growth.

Impact and Scale of the Initiative

The inaugural FLC Zimbabwe represents a **significant milestone** for the country's hospitality and tourism industry. Bringing together eight institutions, senior government representatives, and industry executives, the Challenge demonstrates Zimbabwe's commitment to youth empowerment, sustainable talent development, and future-ready workforce strategies.

This milestone is made possible thanks to the support of leading partners including **Hilton, Radisson Hotel Group, Accor, Topia Water, Cresta Hotels, Sango Conference Centre, GameChangers Community, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe, Hospitality Association of Zimbabwe, and Africa's Eden Tourism Association**. Their collaboration reflects a shared commitment to long-term workforce development and youth empowerment in the region.

Part of a Global Journey

Zimbabwe joins the growing **MEA Future Leaders Challenge movement**, which is expanding across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Winners from each national and regional edition will participate in the **Global Finals in Dubai in 2026**, presenting their innovative solutions on a world stage.

From Harare to Dubai, the journey of Zimbabwe's future leaders begins today.

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About the Future Leaders Platform

The (MEA) Future Leaders Platform is the leading platform that creates a community to tackle future challenges in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Our platform fosters alignment across the region on key issues such as industry attractiveness, growth, learning strategies, student-to-industry conversion and more. We aim to bridge the gap between key stakeholders, including the industry and educational institutions, to align output with industry needs and collaboratively shape a human capital strategy for the region.

Our platform unites industry executives, top-tier students, government leaders, and school directors to collaborate on an annually selected, region-specific strategic topic.

Together, we develop actionable solutions that address the critical challenges facing the hospitality and tourism industry. Through advocacy and stakeholder collaboration, we strive to elevate, strategize, and champion the development of the region's human capital.

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<https://www.futureleaderschallenge.com/>