

Lusaka, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007

## **RSZ Passenger Coaches and Station Facilities Rehabilitated** *RSZ committed to the turnaround of Zambia's railway sector*

**The Railway Systems of Zambia is reviving the country's railway transport sector through investments in rehabilitating passenger coaches, refurbishing train stations along the line of rail from Livingstone to Kitwe and improving operations in the sector.** The company was selected by the Government of the Republic of Zambia to take over the operations of the former Zambia Railways Limited in 2003.

In 2004, the company brought in 28 fully refurbished passenger coaches to replace the old coaches which were used by Zambia Railways Limited. These coaches were sourced from South Africa with 24 economy class coaches and 4 baggage vans that service the route.

However, within a period of two years, all 28 coaches were vandalised which led to the non-availability of electricity and running water. In July 2007, RSZ embarked on an ambitious rehabilitation programme to overhaul the 28 coaches so that electricity, water and other facilities on all the coaches could be restored. At the end of December 2007, all the 28 coaches, which are used to service the Livingstone to Kitwe route three times a week per direction, were successfully rehabilitated. Currently, 10 of the 28 coaches are undergoing external body painting at the RSZ workshop in Kabwe and are due to be released for public use at the end of January 2008. This investment is a realisation of the RSZ vision to offer a safe and affordable service to the travelling public. The total cost of rehabilitating the 28 coaches and spray painting of the 10 coaches is K250 million.

The station upgrades include a facelift to all the major railway stations in Choma, Kabwe, Kafue, Kalomo, Kapiri Mposhi, Kitwe, Livingstone, Lusaka, Mazabuka and Ndola such as maintenance of passenger waiting halls, platforms and public amenities. To date, RSZ has spent over K130 million on this upgrading programme and a budgetary allocation of K449 million is under consideration for Phase 2 in 2008.

The RSZ places safety first in its operations and routine maintenance of all the passenger coaches is carried out before departure from Livingstone and Kitwe with en-route inspection at Kafue. Full maintenance is done as and when necessary at the company workshop in Kabwe.

Under its passenger safety programme, the company has put in place first aid equipment on all the trains to cater for any emergencies and has partnered with bus operators to ensure the timely evacuation of passengers in the event of serious blockages and disruptions on the rail line.

Rhumphi Enterprises Limited, a local company, has been contracted to supply comprehensive cleaning services at originating depots while standard cleaning is done en-route at least five times.

With a total seating capacity of 720 passengers, the train service operations are governed by strict safety rules and regulations as enshrined in the operating rules and regulations of the RSZ. The company ensures that only senior, experienced drivers are assigned to work passenger trains.

The RSZ regularly provides its passenger service to peasant farmers, traders and school groups. The company is exploring opportunities to support the tourism sector through its service along the line of rail which remains a critical link for the major towns and cities of Zambia.

With RSZ's re-investment in equipment and passenger coaches, infrastructure and technology, well and truly underway, the country is seeing a revival of the railway transport sector by a company that's committed to Zambia's transformation. The RSZ forecasts 2008 to be the year of a positive partnership with Zambia, its people and the economy



