Strategic Leadership Summit 2026

April 8 – 11, 2026 , Century City Urban Square Hotel & Conference Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

Insurance Leadership Transformation Blueprint

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Introduction

The Insurance Institute of Zimbabwe (IIZ) successfully hosted the 2nd edition of the Strategic Leadership Summit in Cape Town South Africa. From April 8 to 11, 2026 insurance leaders gathered at the stunning Century City Urban Square Hotel and Conference Centre to share practical ideas and insights on the theme: The Insurance CEO Playbook: Growth, Innovation and Risk Mastery.

The convening objectives were anchored on equipping insurance leaders in Southern Africa with transformative insights on emerging risks, ESG imperatives, innovation in underwriting, and strategic leadership, enabling them to future-proof their organizations in a volatile global market.

During the summit, the discussions centered on the future of insurance – highlighting opportunities and disruptors that will reshape the practice of insurance. A regulatory perspective on ESG integration to balancing compliance and profitability was shared with the director of insurance at IPEC. The conversations further explored the evolution on insurtech and the need for insurance leaders to adopt a growth mindset to build more resilient, inclusive and sustainable organizations.

C-suites from different leading organizations including Emeritus Reinsurance, Sanctuary Insurance Company, Insurance Council of Zimbabwe, Old Mutual, Zimbabwe Insurance Brokers, MUCA Reinsurance, Zimnat, Specialised Automobile Underwriters of Zimbabwe, ZAC Global, ICRA Rating, HRIB, Credsure, Urban Ubuntu, Insurance Institute of South Africa Fidelity Life Assurance, Fachs Insurance Brokers, IPEC and FBC Insurance were part of the delegates at the summit.

"As custodians of the industry we have a collective mandate to redefine insurance leadership excellence."

- Clementine Chinyuku
IIZ President

Opening ceremony

Clementine Chinyuku, the Insurance Institute of Zimbabwe President officially welcomed and opened the 2026 edition of the Strategic Leadership Summit. She highlighted that, the summit is a deliberate initiative of the institute crafted with purpose and intention of engaging in meaningful industry dialogues with the c-suites.

The c-suites have a shared commitment to grow and transform the insurance industry amidst the economic and global shifts. Clementine noted that, the gathering is happening at a critical turning point of the African insurance industry defined by technological advancements, regulatory developments and emerging risks. This calls for deliberate refinement of our collective strategic intents for sustained growth as an industry, says Clementine.

Her address emphasized that inclusive growth within the African insurance industry is anchored on leadership. She reminded the executives that, leadership is a continuous journey which demands strategic thinking and boldness.

Her concluding remarks urged the industry to partner with the insurance professional body(IIZ) and support initiatives aimed at growing, transforming and developing the African insurance industry.

Execution discipline: turning strategy into measurable results

Gloria Zvaravanhu, Managing Director, Old Mutual Insurance Company, Zimbabwe

"We celebrate strategy too much, and execution too little."

Gloria Zvaravanhu from Old Mutual Zimbabwe shared an executive perspective on the transformative power of execution discipline in turning corporate strategic intents into measurable results. Her submissions were anchored on the belief that, operational execution excellence in corporate strategies results from disciplined daily practices over grand strategies.

In order to turn strategy into measurable results, leaders need to leverage the two models introduced by Gloria during the summit; the Toyota execution code and the 5D execution model. The session reminded insurance leaders that sustainable trust and performance come from consistent execution routines, aligned goals, and relentless improvement.

"Accountability is love in leadership. Every KPI must have a name."

Gloria's execution approach is rooted in the 5D Execution Model centered on:

- Direction: setting clear priorities,
- Data: defining what to measure,
- Discipline: enforcing consistency and routines,
- Delivery: ensuring accountability & results,
- Debrief: reviewing and improving continuously.

The Toyota story was used as a case study of excellence in translating strategic vision into tangible, measurable outcomes. With the Toyota Execution Code, Gloria also highlighted how leaders can build trust through disciplined execution – consistently, over time. Toyota didn't become trusted because of one big strategy; it became trusted because of how it operates – every single day.

The session also unpacked execution truths for every leader to reflect on:

- ✓ Leaders don't have a strategy problem, they have a follow through problem,
- ✓ Tolerated behavior by leaders defines outcomes,
- ✓ When everything is a priority, nothing gets executed.

In insurance, clients don't experience our strategy; they experience our execution.

Execution nuggets for (re)insurance leaders

Prioritize execution culture: as leaders let's shift our focus from strategy formulation to strengthening follow-through mechanisms and accountability. It's time for leaders to shift recognition culture to reward execution (delivery, results and consistency),

Institutionalize early problem-solving: leaders should create processes that address issues at their source to avoid escalation and maintain service quality,

Align organizational goals: adopting a single goal/standard/ direction approach to unify teams and improve execution consistency is foundational,

Measure execution performance: as leaders let's not underestimate the power of defining clear metrics (data) and conducting regular debriefs to review delivery outcomes and drive continuous improvement,

Client-centric execution: designing service processes that make execution excellence visible to clients, enhances trust and satisfaction in the insurance experience.

Reflections:

- Leadership challenge – the central question is "Are we as disciplined in delivering our internal strategies as we are in honoring external claims?"
- Does every employee know their role in strategy?

InsurTech leadership & innovation, the nexus: strategies for sustainability

Shingie Maramba, Chief Operating Officer, Urban Ubuntu Limited

"As leaders, we must move beyond incremental improvements to reimagine insurance for African realities."

Shingie Maramba, a techpreneur of influence in Africa, shared insights that reshapes the insurance leadership in Africa. From a tech perspective, Shingie presented a strategic roadmap for transforming the African insurance sector into a digitally-enabled, trust-centric industry that serves both formal and informal markets.

He further highlighted six strategic priorities for leaders and explored how ecosystems, data, and innovation will drive the 'digital insurance company of the future.' Emphasis was made on the significance of integrating flexible solutions to build resilient insurance platforms.

Reality of insurance in Africa

Shingie's findings indicates that, 97% of population in emerging African markets do not have access to appropriate and affordable insurance. Insurance penetration across Africa remains low across the continent with over two-thirds of people in many countries remaining uninsured. This is not a small group; it's a structural market failure with significant implications for industry growth and societal resilience.

Traditional models are failing to address real customer needs and this calls for the industry to rethink insurance and be innovative enough to tap into this $100-billion-dollar protection gap. Rebuilding trust at scale will truly contribute towards building a more sustainable, inclusive African insurance industry.

Leadership in insurtech

"Data is shifting from a support function to the core engine of profitable, resilient insurance."

Leaders were challenged to be forward thinking executives who leverage insurtech to reach previously underserved markets, lower distribution costs and accurately price and personalize service offerings. He emphasized that, data and analytics is a game changer as AI, machine learning, and IoT are creating new insurance models, offering deeper insights into actual customer behaviour and powering usage based, parametric and real time underwriting.

Key takeaways

- ✓ The shift from standalone products to integrated platforms will define market leaders,
- ✓ Trust-first models are essential for penetrating African markets, especially low-income and informal segments,
- ✓ Data & analytics must be aggressively invested in to enable personalized, risk-aware products,
- ✓ Ecosystem partnerships with fintech, agric, and telco are critical for expanding reach and service depth,
- ✓ Sustainable underwriting should be embedded in product design and strategy to address long-term societal needs.

Future insurance leaders will be those who:

- ✓ Close the protection gap,
- ✓ Build meaningful trust at scale,
- ✓ Embed sustainability in every core model,
- ✓ Orchestrate ecosystems instead of operating in isolation.

> *"Insurance should not merely pay after a loss; it must actively help reduce and prevent that loss."*

Recommendations

"Innovation will be driven by ecosystems, data, and purpose-driven solutions, not by insurers alone."

- ✓ Adopt trust-centric product design tailored to low-income and informal market needs,
- ✓ Invest in advanced data & analytics capabilities to improve risk assessment and customer experience,
- ✓ Forge strategic partnerships. As we embrace technology in insurance business systems and operations, it is crucial to harness collaboration across fintech, agriculture, and telecom ecosystems to broaden service delivery,
- ✓ Integrate sustainability metrics into underwriting processes and product strategies,
- ✓ Migrate to integrated platform models that unify multiple insurance offerings for seamless customer journeys,
- ✓ Develop leadership skills focused on ecosystem orchestration and collaborative innovation to stay ahead in the protection gap race,
- ✓ Pilot digital insurance solutions to test scalability and adaptability in African insurance markets.

ESG integration & regulatory outlook: balancing compliance and profitability

Sibongile Siwela, Director Insurance, Insurance & Pensions Commission of Zimbabwe

The Director of Insurance at the Insurance and Pensions Commission of Zimbabwe, Sibongile Siwela was one of the distinguished presenters at the 2nd IIZ Strategic Leadership Summit. Her session titled; *ESG Integration & Regulatory Outlook: Balancing Compliance and Profitability* focused on how Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are reshaping the insurance and pensions industry, especially in Zimbabwe. She outlined the global ESG imperative, Zimbabwe's specific regulatory

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As the industry moves towards sustainable inclusive growth, designing innovative insurance solutions with a focus on index or climate insurance that meet ESG criteria and market needs, drives growth and inclusion,

journey, including Circular 44, the Nairobi Declaration on Sustainable Insurance, and IFRS S1/S2. She summed up the session with strategies for turning ESG compliance into a profit driver, and emphasized the role of innovation in ESG-focused products such as index insurance.

Leadership strategic priorities

As the regulator champions the integration of ESG within the insurance industry, the question remains; what should leaders within the industry prioritize?

The question is not whether to adopt ESG, it is how fast and how strategic?

Boards and executives: the director of insurance urged executives and boards to appoint ESG champions, establish sustainability governance structures and embed climate risk in board level risk appetite statements,

- **Risk and compliance teams:** this is the time to begin ESG materiality assessments and building data infrastructure for IFRS S1 and S2 reporting by 2028 – 2030,
- **Investment teams:** development of ESG investment policies should be a priority and identification of social bonds and ESG screened equity opportunities,
- **Product and actuarial teams:** it is crucial for these teams to prioritize designing of climate resilient products that align with principles of sustainable insurance. The director also urged exploration of index insurance and parametric structures for new markets,
- Industry associations: the director called on associations to coordinate common ESG standards, share best practices and constructively engage the regulator on regulation development and implementation.

Key takeaways

Global ESG imperative: ESG is now a decisive factor in insurance and pensions, influencing risk assessment, product design, and long-term resilience,

Zimbabwe’s regulatory environment: regulatory developments like Circular 44, Nairobi Declaration, IFRS S1/S2 require insurers to embed ESG disclosures and compliance into business processes,

Compliance profit link: effective ESG integration enhance corporate reputation, reduce risk exposure, and unlock new revenue streams through sustainable product offerings,

Innovation focus: ESG-driven products such as index insurance and climate-related solutions are essential for market differentiation and resilience,

Growth & resilience: ESG practices position insurers to better manage environmental and social risks, fostering sustainable inclusive growth in the Zimbabwean market.

Recommendations

- Embed ESG into strategic planning: the regulator urged insurance leaders to align corporate strategy with ESG objectives and regulatory requirements (Circular 44, IFRS S1/S2) to ensure compliance and value creation,
- Develop ESG focused products: as the industry moves towards sustainable inclusive growth, designing innovative insurance solutions with a focus on index or climate insurance that meet ESG criteria and market needs, drives growth and inclusion,
- Build ESG capacity: the industry should provide training for leadership and staff on ESG integration to drive cultural adoption and operational efficiency.

Building a resilient and inclusive insurance market: climate risk, technology and ESG in practice

Donald Muthe, Chief Executive Officer, Insurance Council of Zimbabwe

"Rather than avoid risk, take intelligent risks. It will give you a competitive edge."

The Insurance Council of Zimbabwe (ICZ) and other industry stakeholders have been working towards enhancing the country's insurance market, focusing on climate risk, technology, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. At the IIZ strategic leadership summit, the CEO of ICZ, Donald Muthe shared practical insights on how the council is collectively working with the industry to build a resilient, inclusive insurance industry.

His presentation covered various aspects, including the importance of insurance in addressing climate-related risks in agriculture, the role of technology in transforming the insurance industry, and the need for inclusive and sustainable insurance practices.

Donald emphasized the critical role of agriculture insurance in safeguarding agricultural livelihoods and the urgent need for insurance leaders to position the industry for a greener future.

Muthe also analyzed Zimbabwe's vulnerability to climate change, showing how increased drought frequency affects GDP growth, investment, and agricultural production. He urged insurance leaders to shift their focus on six sectors of financial inclusion & market expansion:

- Smallholder farmers; access to credit, crop insurance, digital payments,
- Smallholder livestock; input financing & traceability solutions,
- Informal sector; microloans, digital wallets, simplified savings,
- Small scale miners; equipment financing & secure payments,
- Tech based solutions; mobile money, fintech, digital remittances,
- Public assets; public-private partnerships for infrastructure financing.

Key takeaways

Climate risk: Zimbabwe is highly vulnerable to climate change, with rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns affecting agriculture and livelihoods,

Insurance solutions: agricultural index insurance and parametric insurance can provide timely payouts to smallholder farmers, enhancing their resilience to climate-related shocks,

Technology: digital platforms and data analytics can improve insurance accessibility and affordability for underserved communities,

ESG principles: embedding ESG principles into insurance practices can promote sustainable development and climate risk management.

Recommendations

- Develop tailored insurance products: as an industry we need to start designing insurance products that address the specific needs of smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities,
- Invest in climate smart technologies: let's leverage emerging technologies to enhance insurance accessibility and affordability,
- Promote ESG principles: integration of ESG principles into insurance practices to promote sustainable development should be a priority,
- Enhance financial inclusion: our focus as an industry should shift towards expanding insurance coverage to underserved communities, focusing on women, youth, and informal sector workers.

Let's advocate for integration of climate vulnerability assessments into national economic planning to guide investment and policy decisions.

Call to action

Reskilling the insurance workforce: a strategic imperative

The insurance industry is evolving with AI, climate risk, digital platforms and regulatory complexity reshaping operations however, Zimbabwe is facing a brain drain of skilled professionals to global markets and without deliberate reskilling, the sector risks falling behind in product innovation, customer engagement and resilience.

Way forward

- ✓ Upskill and cross train underwriting, actuarial, IT and claims teams,
- ✓ Partner with universities and technical institutes for pipeline talent,
- ✓ Develop continuous learning pathways for digital tools, sustainability and innovation,
- ✓ Create mentorship and retention strategies for remaining top talent.

Growth through developing a high performance leadership coaching culture

Dr. Charles Mugaviri, Leadership Coach

"You cannot rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your mindset. Change the mindset first. The culture will follow."

Dr. Charles Mugaviri's session focused on the transformative power of embedding a coaching centric leadership culture to drive high performance within the evolving insurance landscape. His submissions centered on shifting from traditional management to coaching leadership. Through leadership coaching, insurance leaders can shift their mindset towards growth rather than stagnation.

Dr. Mugaviri also shared practical core mechanisms on how leadership coaching and not training shifts mindsets of executives:

Executive reflection; a disciplined journaling practice that uncovers hidden mindsets using structured, uncomfortable self-assessment questions,

Practical coaching tools; introduction to questioning frameworks (GROW, OSKAR, *Dr. Charles Mugaviri's session focused on the transformative power of embedding a coaching centric leadership culture to drive high performance within the evolving insurance landscape. His submissions centered on shifting from traditional management to coaching leadership. Through leadership coaching, insurance leaders can shift their mindset towards growth rather than stagnation.*

CLEAR) that replace directive management with empowering dialogue,

Real workplace application; applying coaching to live business challenges, turning mindset insights into actionable performance improvements,

Peer learning; mindset shifts are social. In isolation, old thinking returns,

360-degree feedback; the gap between self-perception and others' perception is where mindset work begins,

90-day performance challenge; the constraint forces the mindset shift.

The session blended theory with practical examples, encouraging leaders to adopt weekly reflective routines and replace one traditional directive meeting with a GROW coaching conversation.

Key takeaways

- ✓ Mindset exposure is essential for growth; unexamined assumptions limit performance,
- ✓ Guided reflection of 20-30 minutes journaling creates private accountability and learning,
- ✓ The GROW model provides a simple, four-step questioning sequence to clarify goals, reality, options, and commitment,
- ✓ Coaching tools such as GROW, OSKAR, CLEAR shift leadership style from telling to asking, fostering ownership,

Leadership insights for culture initiatives to succeed:

- ✓ Start with leader mindset shifts and not launching new values poster campaigns,
- ✓ Create conditions for new thinking rather than mandating new behaviours,
- ✓ Start at the executive level and not train middle managers first,
- ✓ Focus on beliefs and assumptions rather than skills only,
- ✓ Measure mindset change and not activity.

"Mindset shift precedes culture shift. Culture shift precedes growth."

Power thought

A fixed mindset protects what exists. A growth mindset creates what is possible. In insurance we are paid to assess risk. But the greatest risk is a leader who has stopped growing. Your mindset is your most valuable asset. Protect it by challenging it. Develop it by sharing it. And watch your culture and your growth transform.

The future of insurance: opportunities and disruptors

Thokozile Mahlangu, Chief Executive Officer, Insurance Institute of South Africa

"The future of insurance will belong to institutions that stop seeing themselves merely as payers of claims and start acting as architects of resilience, trust and growth."

The future of insurance: opportunities & disruptors session facilitated by Thokozile Mahlangu, CEO of the Insurance Institute of South Africa examined how the insurance industry must evolve from traditional claim-payer models to becoming architects of resilience, trust, and growth. The agenda blended global shifts reshaping insurance with Africa's unique leapfrog opportunity, focusing on digital transformation, inclusive protection, and climate-centric solutions. She also explored why the change matters now, global drivers of disruption, Africa's strategic positioning, leadership transformation for C-suites, and Zimbabwe's 5-year action agenda.

Key takeaways

Global disruption: AI, climate volatility, cyber risk, embedded distribution, and capital fragmentation are forcing insurers to shift from payer to partner, product to platform, and hindsight to foresight,

Africa's leapfrog opportunity: Thokozile indicated that the continent can redesign insurance architecture through mobile-first engagement, inclusive growth, climate solutions, and ecosystem integration, addressing a massive protection gap,

Strategic pillars for Africa

Mobile first: digital, open-source products for accessibility,

Inclusive growth: mass-market L&A with alternative work focus,

Climate solutions: agricultural & weather-indexed insurance,

Ecosystems: embedded insurance in digital platforms.

Seven growth plays: embedded insurance, micro-inclusive products, silo/informal sector integration, health-wellness bundles, climate-agricultural insurance, digital claims, and development partnerships,

Zimbabwe agenda: insurers must build platforms, digitise operations, protect SMEs, and embed climate resilience over the next five years.

Recommendations

- Adopt a platform-centric model: shift from product-selling to ecosystem platforms that embed insurance into everyday digital experiences – mobile-first,
- Leverage inclusive product design: develop micro-insurance and parametric solutions tailored to informal sectors and underserved populations to close the protection gap,
- Drive digital transformation: implement AI-enabled claims processing and open-source digital products to improve efficiency and customer experience,
- Foster strategic partnerships: collaborate with development agencies, fintechs, and ecosystem players to expand distribution and funding for inclusive insurance schemes,
- Leadership evolution: c-suite executives should champion a cultural shift toward foresight-driven, customer-centric insurance architectures, aligning with global disruptors and local opportunities.

Call to action

The future of insurance will belong to leaders who understand that protection is not only a product. It is a promise, a platform and increasingly a public good.

The winners will not be the insurers with the most history – they will be the insurers with the best data, the strongest trust, the smartest partnerships and the courage to reinvent leadership itself.

Best data: leverage AI, analytics and data partnerships for superior risk assessment and customer insights,

Strongest trust: build credibility through transparent claims, fair pricing and consistent delivery,

Smartest partnerships: create ecosystem value through strategic alliances with fintechs, banks and platforms.

Choose your path: respond defensively to preserve yesterday model, or respond boldly to build an insurance sector that is more inclusive, innovative, trusted, strategic and relevant.

From solvency to sustainability: long term insurer credibility

Ephraim Chawoneka, CEO, International Credit Rating Agency (ICRA), Zimbabwe

"Credibility acts as the bridge between solvency and sustainability. A credit rating is no longer just a 'sticker' but a signal of enduring institutional health."

Ephraim Chawoneka's presentation focused on the urgent need for the insurance industry to shift from SOLVENCY to SUSTAINABILITY rating. Traditionally solvency has served as the backbone of insurance confidence as it reflects the financial strength of an insurer and its ability to meet obligations as they grow over time.

However, Ephraim's findings showed that solvency tells a single sided story of where the insurer stands today and not where it will stand tomorrow. He also highlighted that, the shift to sustainability is not always visible through internal metrics alone, it needs independent and structured evaluations (credit ratings).

This session also unpacked ICRA's regulatory and analytical framework for the insurance sector in Zimbabwe and the region. ICRA has a global footprint, and accredited with key Zimbabwean authorities (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Insurance & Pensions Commission of Zimbabwe (IPEC), and Securities Exchange Commission). ICRA uses the RAMELS methodology for assessing insurers' financial health.

The RAMELS model translates to:

R – risk underwritten,

A – asset quality,

M – management and governance,

E – earnings strength,

L – liquidity and financial flexibility,

S – solvency margin.

RAMELS methodology used by ICRA is a critical tool for regulatory supervision and strategic decision-making in insurance and reinsurance businesses.

Key Takeaways

RAMELS methodology: a six pillar framework that measures the overall health and stability of insurers,

Regulatory alignment: the RAMELS framework is endorsed by regulatory authorities and aligns with IPEC's minimum standards for (re) insurance, making it a benchmark for compliance and risk assessment,

Strategic importance: effective use of RAMELS improves investment portfolio quality, asset safety, management oversight, earnings sustainability, liquidity management, and capital adequacy.

Why being rated?

- Enhanced credibility: independent validation of financial strength,
- Market trust: provides comfort to policyholders, brokers and investors,
- Risk discovery: rating process identifies 'blind spots' in the business model and operating environment,
- Operational discipline: encourages rigorous financial reporting and risk management.

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