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BANDA TARGETS MORE TROPHIES AT ORLANDO PRIDE

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ZAMBIA MUST FIND WINNING COMBINATIONS – BANDA

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ZAMBIA MUST FIND WINNING COMBINATIONS – BANDA

By Lucky Chama



Football analyst Maria Banda says Zambia need to establish strong player combinations as the Chipolopolo begin their 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying campaign against Algeria and Togo this month.

Banda says while Zambia appear to have a settled attacking combination, there remains uncertainty in midfield and defence, where she believes the team has struggled to develop consistency.

Writing under the title "Zambia's Football, Which Way Are We Going?", Banda said player continuity had eluded the Chipolopolo just as much as coaching continuity.

"63 percent of the current call-ups have played for Zambia in the last five matches. From this, it is very clear to me that we seem to know our attacking combination, but not so much our midfield and, more importantly, our defence," Banda said.

She identified Patson Daka, Fashion Sakala and Lameck Banda as an attacking combination that has developed through competitive international matches together.

"It is somehow clear that our attacking force has a combination of Daka, Fashion Sakala and Lameck Banda, well-established internationals who have played competitive matches together," she said.

Banda, however, said defensive continuity remained a major concern, despite the current squad featuring players with recent international exposure.

"The current squad has players such as Dominic Chanda, Obino Chisala, Frederick Mwimanzi and Tinkler Sinkala. These players have some recent level of international exposure, but the defensive unit is not the same established combination that we have used in previous competitive campaigns," she said.

She believes the lack of solid combinations could make Zambia's AFCON qualification challenge more difficult.

"And this is what concerns me. Not having solid combinations at this point, when we are fighting for AFCON qualification, leaves a very bad taste in my mouth about the reality of the difficult challenge we are about to experience in these qualifiers," Banda said.

She questioned whether Zambia should continue rebuilding the national team whenever there is a change in the technical bench.

"At some point, we have to ask ourselves: when are we going to build a team rather than continually rebuild a team?" she asked.

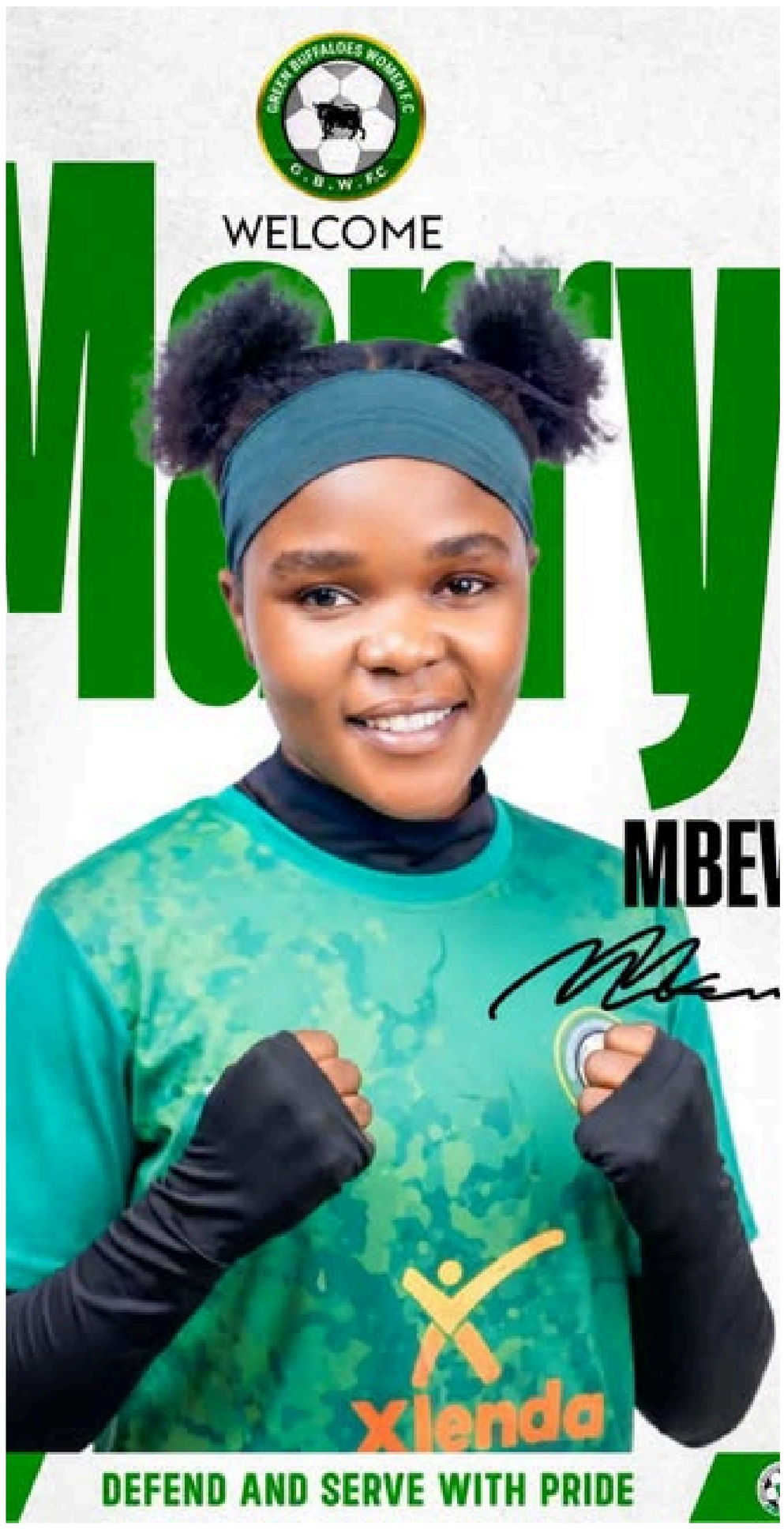
Banda said football success requires more than individual talent, stressing the importance of continuity and understanding between players.

"Because football is not only about having talented players. It is also about continuity, understanding, combinations and knowing what the player next to you is going to do before he or she does it," she said.

Zambia will begin their AFCON 2027 qualifying campaign away to Algeria on September 25 before hosting Togo on September 29.

GREEN BUFFALOES WOMEN REINFORCE SQUAD WITH THREE SIGNINGS

By Lucky Chama



Green Buffaloes Women Football Club have strengthened their squad with the permanent signings of experienced defender Vast Phiri, promising young defender Lweendo Hanongo and Zambia international striker Mary Mbewe.

Phiri joins from ZESCO Ndola Girls with extensive domestic and international experience, having previously represented the Zambia Women's National Team at major tournaments.

The central defender was part of Zambia's squad for the 2018 Women's Africa Cup of Nations, the delayed 2020 Olympic Games and the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. She also made a cameo appearance at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

Green Buffaloes said Phiri's composure, discipline, leadership and reading of the game would add depth and quality to their defence.

Hanongo, 18, arrives from Driven Queens as one of the promising young defenders in Zambian women's football.

The defender has represented Zambia at youth level, featuring at the 2024 and 2025 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cups before progressing to the U-20 national team, where she remains part of the squad.

Hanongo was also part of the Zambia team that won the 2024 COSAFA U-17 Women's Championship.

Meanwhile, Mbewe crosses from rivals ZESCO Ndola Girls to join Buffaloes, bringing international experience and attacking qualities to the squad.

The club described the striker's arrival as an exciting addition as it prepares for the new season.

The three signings are expected to strengthen Green Buffaloes in defence and attack while adding a mix of experience and youth to the squad.

NKWAZI RELEASE 14 AS ZULU JOINS CHIRUNDU UNITED

By Lucky Chama



Nkwazi Football Club have released 14 players as part of their squad restructuring, with long-serving striker Christopher Zulu joining newly promoted MTN Super League side Chirundu United on loan.

The Zambia Police Service-sponsored club announced the departures as preparations continue for the 2026 Transition League.

Zulu is among the players leaving Nkwazi, with the experienced striker set to join Chirundu United on a long-term loan arrangement.

Goalkeeper Lukas Mainza has also left on loan, joining Red Arrows, while Carlos Kaoma has moved to NAPSA Stars.

Nkwazi winger Harry Milanzi Jr has returned to Green Buffaloes, his parent club, while David Mumba Majapa has also returned to his parent club.

Other departures include Wezzy Kumwenda, who has joined Nampundwe FC on loan, while Emmanuel Museka and Joseph Lungu have returned to their respective parent clubs.

Chabala Kasanda, Boston Muchindu, David Mumba, Enock Simbeye and Gloire Bakafwa have left following the expiry of their contracts.

Henry Chama has departed through mutual separation.

Nkwazi said the changes were part of an ongoing squad restructuring exercise ahead of the new season.

“The club acknowledges the commitment, dedication, and contributions of each player during their time with Nkwazi FC and appreciates their service to the team,” the club said in a statement issued by media officer Jeff Mwape.

Nkwazi thanked all 14 players for their efforts and contributions and wished them success in their future football careers.

“The club remains committed to strengthening its squad and building a competitive team as preparations continue for the 2026 Transition League,” the statement added.

The club said further updates on its preparations and squad composition would be communicated through its official channels.



BANDA TARGETS MORE TROPHIES AT ORLANDO PRIDE AFTER CONTRACT RENEWAL

By Lucky Chama



Zambian international forward Barbra Banda is targeting more trophies with Orlando Pride after signing a new long-term contract that will keep her at the club through the 2029 NWSL season.

The Pride announced the contract renewal on Monday, securing the services of the Copper Queens captain as she continues to build a successful career in Orlando.

Banda said she felt at home at the club and was excited to continue her journey with the Pride.

“I’m so excited because I feel at home when I’m here, and I feel like I’ve made this place my second home,” Banda told Orlando-Pride.com.

The Zambian forward has enjoyed a highly successful spell in Orlando since joining the club in 2024.

In her first season, Banda scored 13 goals and provided six assists, earned an NWSL Best XI First Team selection and was named BBC Women’s Footballer of the Year.

She also helped Orlando win its first NWSL Shield and NWSL Championship in the same season, scoring the winning goal in the championship match and being named Championship MVP.

Reflecting on that campaign, Banda said the teamwork and spirit within the squad were key to their success.

“Honestly, I came in, I knew it was a tough league and a lot of expectations. But I think when I go back to 2024, we really did well, and the teamwork that we had, the spirit we played with,” she said.

“I believe we still have a great team, and we still want to win more trophies together.”

Banda has since established herself among the league’s prolific forwards, scoring 41 goals in 62 appearances across all competitions over her time at the club.

After missing half of the 2025 season, she has returned strongly in 2026, scoring 16 goals in 20 matches and surpassing the club’s previous single-season record of 13 goals.

Her current scoring form has also placed her in contention for the NWSL Golden Boot.

Banda credited her teammates and coaching staff for helping her develop while competing in what she described as one of the world’s best leagues.

“I’ve learned a lot from this league. I would say it’s one of the best leagues in the world because the teams are so competitive, and you never go into a game relaxed,” she said.

“You need to up your game each and every time. You need to be mentally fit, physically fit. It’s a battle you need to win.”

The Copper Queens captain also praised the support she receives from Orlando’s fans, saying their presence provides motivation for the team.

“It means a lot because I think they give us so much motivation,” Banda said. “We are playing at our home and with our fans, it gives us the courage to keep on and to fight for them.”

With her future now secured, Banda has set her sights on adding more silverware to her Orlando career.

“The future is bright,” she said. “I still want to win more trophies and more things to come to this team, and I’m ready to fight for this club and everyone.”

ZAMBIA EYE 13TH COSAFA U20 TITLE

By Lucky Chama



Zambia's Junior Chipolopolo will be looking to extend their record to 13 COSAFA Under-20 Championship titles when they begin their 2026 campaign in Mozambique.

The Junior Chipolopolo travelled to Mozambique on Wednesday for the 2026 TotalEnergies CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)/COSAFA Qualifier, which runs from September 18 to 27.

Coach Perry Mutapa's side left Lusaka at 13:30 hours aboard South African Airways, beginning their campaign with the aim of reclaiming the regional title for the first time since 2022.

Zambia are the record 12-time champions and have been drawn in Group C alongside Malawi, Comoros and Botswana.

Mutapa has named a 26-member squad for the tournament and has used recent practice matches to fine-tune the team and address key areas ahead of the competition.

The 12 participating teams have been divided into three groups of four, with progression determined according to the tournament regulations.

Hosts Mozambique headline Group A alongside Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles, while Group B comprises South Africa, Angola, Lesotho and Eswatini.

Group C features Zambia, Malawi, Comoros and Botswana.

Zambia's squad comprises goalkeepers Christo Chitambala of Kabwe Warriors and Hendrix Kanyungulu of Green Eagles.

The defenders are Andrew Mwape (Nkwazi), Charles Kampamba and Jonathan M. Kalimina (both Kafue Celtic), Joseph Shankandi (Mufulira Wanderers), Samson Jimmy Ngoma (Airport Warriors) and Gift Mumbi (Game On FC).

The midfielders are Wise Kambanji (Young Zanaco), Allan Mumba (ZESCO United), Tumelo Mununga (C.D Leganes, Spain), Duncan Musialela (Green Eagles), Philimon Chilimina (Chirundu United), Bunonge Bunonge (Lumwana Radiants), Gilbert Lungu (FC MUZA), Evaristo Himanga (Chirundu United) and Felix Jere (Green Buffaloes).

The forwards are Thomas Mwanza (Lumwana Radiants), John Foloko (Mufulira Wanderers), Gibson Mooya (Power Dynamos), Kayula Chinunda (Mpande Youth), Billy Daka (Nkwazi), Bridger Ng'andu (FC MUZA), Sipho Mutanga Jr (Randburg FC, South Africa), Abel Salim Nyirongo (Atletico Lusaka) and Daniel Silubonde (Power Dynamos).

The Junior Chipolopolo will be hoping their preparations translate into a strong campaign as they pursue another regional crown and a return to the top of COSAFA's Under-20 competition.

MIRIAM PHIRI STARS AS ZAMBIA MAKE IT TWO WINS FROM TWO AT IHF ZONE 6 NATIONS TROPHY

By Enock Phiri

The Zambia Senior Women's Handball Team continued their impressive start to the inaugural IHF Zone 6 Senior Women's Nations Trophy with a commanding 51–09 victory over Eswatini.

The Queens produced a dominant display from start to finish, controlling the contest and eventually securing a 42-goal winning margin.

Miriam Phiri was named Player of the Match after another standout individual performance that helped drive Zambia to their second consecutive victory.

The result means Zambia now have two wins from two matches and remain firmly focused on their campaign at the OYDC Zambia – Sports Development Centre in Lusaka.

After opening the tournament strongly, the Queens will now look to maintain their momentum as the competition intensifies.



NALUMANGO CLEARED TO PLAY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

By Lucky Chama



Former Zambia Under-17 and Under-20 defender Milimo Nalumango has been named in South Africa's final 23-member squad for the CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations COSAFA Qualifier starting Friday in Mozambique.

South Africa U20 head coach Raymond Mdaka confirmed that Nalumango has been cleared by FIFA and the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) to represent Amajita at the tournament.

Nalumango, who previously featured for Zambia at the Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations, is set to face his former country's neighbours after earning a place in South Africa's squad.

Mdaka said he was initially surprised when Nalumango joined the team because of his previous involvement with Zambia, but the coaching staff followed the required procedures after the player and his parents expressed an interest in him representing South Africa.

"I was shocked the day he came to the session. I felt it's not here [not on list] because he played for Zambia," Mdaka said.

He said Nalumango had already spent considerable time in South Africa and had established relationships with several players in the squad.

"The boy has been here for some time. It's just that he has played for Zambia. He has been with most of the boys that are here," he said.

Mdaka said the South African technical team then formally engaged the relevant authorities to ensure the player's eligibility was properly addressed.

"But what we did, so that we are not caught on the wrong side, immediately the boy came and showed an interest, and the parents showed an interest, we decided to go professionally," he said.

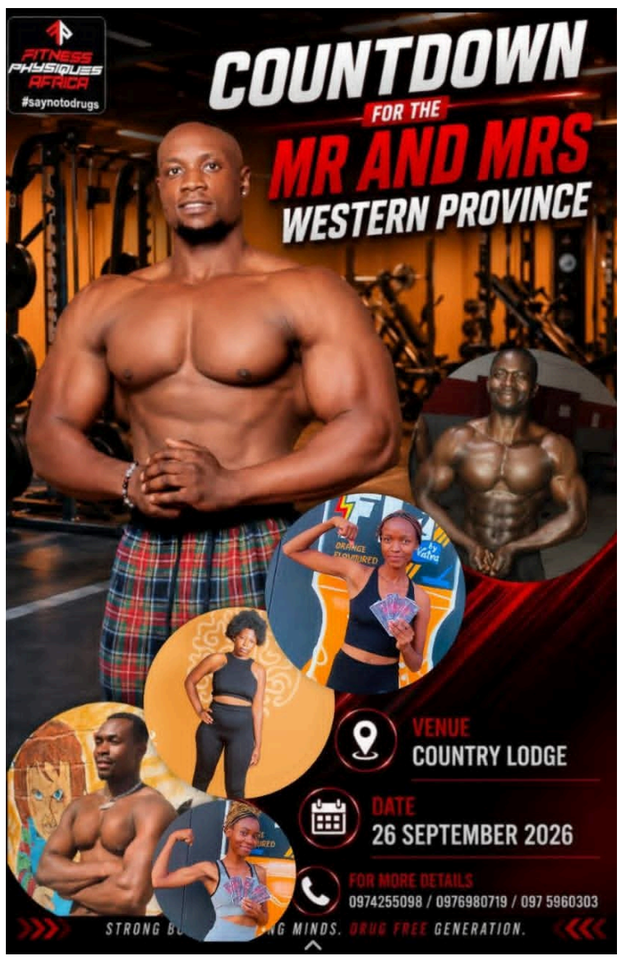
"So we went to the office to indicate that there is this situation. There is this boy, we want to do this. And we engaged with FIFA. They told us the processes. We followed the processes."

According to Mdaka, FIFA subsequently engaged FAZ before the necessary clearance was granted.

"They engaged with Zambia until at long last they were able to allow us and at least the boy to be able to play for South Africa," he said.

South Africa depart for Mozambique on Thursday ahead of the tournament, where they have been drawn against Lesotho, Angola and Eswatini in the group stages.

The tournament gets underway on Friday and will bring together 12 teams competing for regional honours and qualification opportunities under the CAF Under-20 AFCON/COSAFA competition.



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NOCZ PRESIDENT FOLOKO MEETS NPCZ EXECUTIVE, WELCOMES CLOSER COLLABORATION

By NOCZ Media



National Olympic Committee of Zambia (NOCZ) President Alfred Foloko has held a meeting with the Executive Committee of the National Paralympic Committee of Zambia (NPCZ), describing the engagement as an honour and welcoming the committee's interest in collaborating with NOCZ.

Foloko applauded the NPCZ leadership for taking the time to engage with the NOCZ and expressed interest in strengthening cooperation between the two organisations in areas that can contribute to the development of sport and athletes in Zambia.

The engagement followed an earlier meeting between the NPCZ Executive and NOCZ Secretary General/CEO Boniface Kambikambi on 15 September 2026, where the NPCZ shared some of its programmes and plans, including its Draft Strategic Plan 2026–2029.

The discussions also focused on areas of mutual interest, including governance, athlete development, technical capacity, resource mobilisation, safeguarding, sports administration and preparations for major international competitions.

Kambikambi expressed delight at the initiative taken by the NPCZ leadership to be on the ground and work on strengthening its structures,noting that having sound structures in place would help position the committee to attract and engage other key stakeholders.

NPCZ President Lango Sinkamba thanked the NOCZ Executive for its open-door policy and for providing his team with an opportunity to share its plans and engage with the Olympic Committee.
Sinkamba was accompanied by NPCZ Secretary General Moses Chishimba and other members of the Executive Committee.

MANCHESTER UNITED SUFFER A HUMILIATING CARABAO CUP EXIT AT OLD TRAFFORD

By BBC Sport



Manchester United suffered a humiliating Carabao Cup exit at Old Trafford as Brighton came from two goals down to reach the last 16.

United head coach Michael Carrick had to bring on skipper Bruno Fernandes 18 minutes from time in a desperate attempt to salvage the game after watching his side concede twice in four second-half minutes.

It was the first time United had led at home by two goals and lost since they were beaten 3-2 by Tottenham in 1976, half a century ago.

The small band of Brighton fans were jubilant as they celebrated in the corner of Old Trafford, with the home fans booing their team off at the final whistle.

It was the worst possible outcome for United and Carrick, still reeling from the stunning Manchester derby defeat by 10-man City - followed by 15-year-old academy star JJ Gabriel informing the club of his intention to quit.

United thought they had the perfect response when their other highly rated youngster Shea Lacey marked his first senior start with a well-taken goal after just eight minutes.

Mason Mount doubled their advantage two minutes later when he drove home the rebound from a Marcus Rashford effort that had been blocked.

At that point, it looked like being a good night for Carrick and his team.

But Charalampos Kostoulas pulled one back just before half-time. Brighton skipper Pascal Gross levelled when he was left on his own on the edge of the area and had time to turn on to a clearance from halfway and send his shot beyond Wales goalkeeper Karl Darlow, who was making his United debut.

Four minutes later, Kostoulas turned supplier as he cut the ball back for substitute Maxim de Cuyper to finish.

Jason Steele denied Marcus Rashford an equaliser at one end, but United were reliant on Darlow denying Diego Gomez a fourth Brighton goal.

After their humbling EFL Cup loss at League Two Grimsby last season, followed by Brighton's FA Cup triumph here in January, it was a third successive domestic cup loss for Manchester United.

MULENGA CALLS FOR CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF YOUNG PLAYERS

By Lucky Chama



Former Zambia international winger Clifford Mulenga has called for continuous monitoring and development of young players to ensure talent is not lost between national youth teams.

Mulenga was speaking following the selection of Zambia's squad for the U20 COSAFA/CAF Africa Cup of Nations qualifying tournament, congratulating those selected while urging those left out to continue working towards their opportunities.

"These are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Embrace them, work hard, represent Zambia with pride and, most importantly, use this platform as a springboard to greater heights in your football careers," Mulenga said.

He said players who miss out on selection at one age group should not be allowed to disappear from the national development system.

"At U20 level, many talented young footballers disappear from the football pathway if they are not properly managed, monitored and given clear opportunities to progress," he said.

Mulenga said he expected to see a significant number of players from the U17 generation that made history by qualifying Zambia for the FIFA U-17 World Cup continuing into the U20 pathway.

He stressed, however, that this should not mean automatic selection.

"Football selection must always be based on current performance, positional requirements, tactical considerations, physical development and the needs of the team," Mulenga said.

"My concern is what happens after selection or non-selection. A player who does not make the U20 team should not simply disappear from the system."

Mulenga specifically named several players from the historic U17 generation whom he believes should continue to be monitored, including Nthasilwe Malupande, Felix Phiri, Vincent Mutondo, Mapalo Simute, Gabriel Phiri, Mike Mutale, Kelvin Mulenga Chipelu, Joseph Zulu, Robert Banda, James Sibene, Savior Mwansa, Steven Lungu, Bongani Ndhlovu, Rodgers Simumba, Wiseman Nyirenda and Emmanuel Mbuti.

He also said several other players within the Football Association of Zambia database should continue to be monitored and developed.

Mulenga further questioned the continuity of players identified during the FIFA talent identification process, saying he was surprised that none of the players from that U17 generation who impressed Arsène Wenger were included in the current U20 squad.

"That, in itself, should encourage us to ask an important question: How do we ensure that the talent identified at 15, 16 and 17 years old is still being developed when those players reach 18, 19 and 20?" he asked.

The former international called for a structured national player pathway linking the U15, U17 and U20 programmes, with players tracked beyond tournaments and assessed regularly.

He said players who fall outside a particular squad should be given opportunities to return to the system.

"If we are serious about building a competitive Zambia for the 2028 Olympics and the 2030 FIFA World Cup, our planning cannot begin when players reach senior international level," Mulenga said.

"It must begin much earlier."

Mulenga said the pathway should run from U15 → U17 → U20 → U23 → Senior National Team, supported by continuity, monitoring, competition, education and proper player management.

"We have talent. We have young footballers capable of making history. Our responsibility is to make sure that when one generation opens the door, we don't lose them before they have had the opportunity to walk through it," he said.

"Develop the player. Protect the pathway. Build the nation."