

# Zimbabwe: Govt, Zimplats Launch Albinism Campaign

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Photo: Amnesty

By Audrey Rundofa

Government and platinum mining giant Zimplats on Wednesday launched a campaign to demystify albinism. Dubbed "Friends with Albinism Campaign", the

(file photo).  
 Undertaking is meant to raise awareness and protect people with albinism against discrimination and abuse in society. Launching the campaign, Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare Minister Patrick Zhuwao said the project sought to facilitate the provision of sun-protection creams, hats and sunglasses to albinos. "This is an appropriate and valuable program for the Government of Zimbabwe, the disability movement and private partners like Zimplats to interrelate and support the shared needs and rights of persons with albinism," he said.

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"Government cannot do it alone, thus, an enabling environment has been put in place to accommodate assistance from partners, including non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

"These awareness-raising programmes become effective when complemented by donations like the one before us from Zimplats consisting of sunglasses, sun creams and sun hats to persons with albinism in Mashonaland West."

The sun-protection items will be received by 500 beneficiaries, some in Matabeleland North province. Minister Zhuwao said albinism was still misunderstood as evidenced by a range of prejudices and social stigma faced by people living with the condition. "These emanate from myths and misconceptions which foster their marginalisation and social exclusion," he said.

"It is for these reasons that, as a nation, we need to raise awareness and protect our fellow citizens against discrimination and abuse." Minister Zhuwao said in line with the United Nations conventions, people with albinism should be respected. Zimplats Holdings chief executive Mr Alex Mhembere said while some parents had the burden of raising children with albinism, others were rejecting them.

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"We also note that children within some communities end up dropping out of schools for various reasons related to their condition such as exposure to the sun during certain activities or poor eyesight," he said.

"Due to these factors, people with albinism remain one of the most vulnerable groups in the country." Mr Mhembere said the "Friends with Albinism Campaign" was designed to drive the integration of people with albinism in society and showing them that they were equal with others in every aspect. "In the audience today we have church and business leaders, members of the community, opinion leaders, policymakers and service providers," he said.

"My challenge to you is that we all need to make an effort to address subconscious biases we may have against people with albinism. Because you have started this journey with us by being a part of today's proceedings, we are urging you to be a true equal-opportunities employer by considering people with albinism who have the appropriate qualifications for employment."



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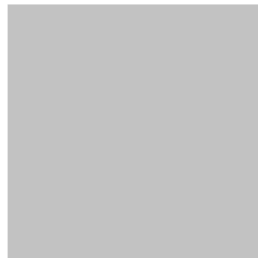
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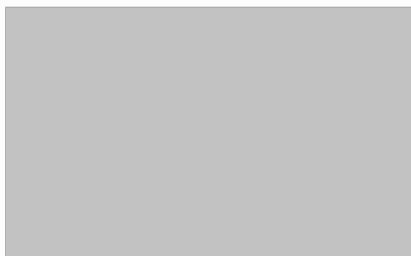


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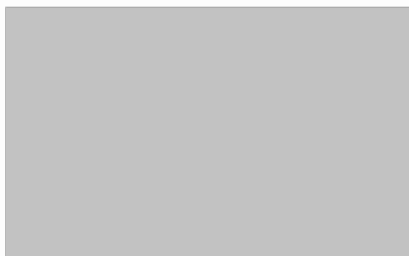
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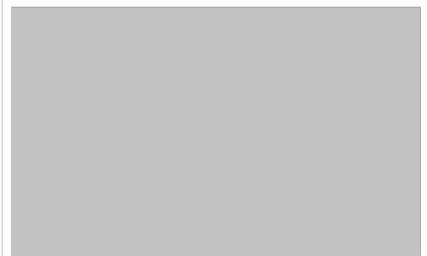
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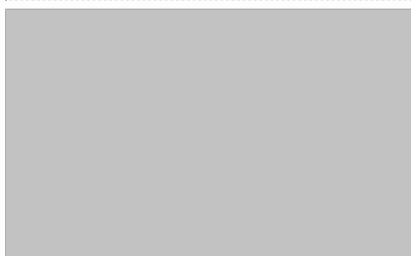
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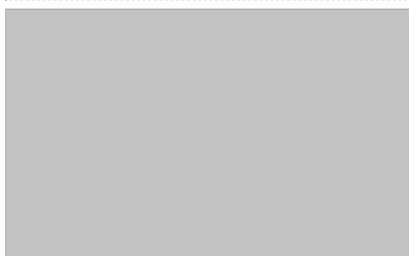
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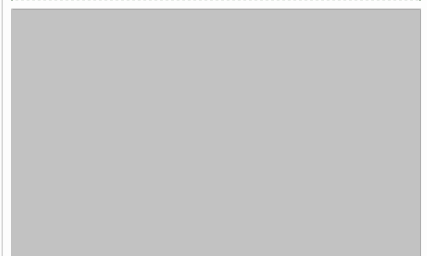
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