

Rwanda is studying Zimbabwe's housing delivery models as it seeks to expand the supply of affordable homes, with officials examining construction methods, financing options and partnerships with private developers during a six-day visit.

The Rwandan delegation met Zimbabwe's Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities, Professor Paul Mavima, in Harare on Wednesday, October 14, as the two countries work to implement a housing cooperation agreement signed in 2023.

Led by Noel Nsanzineza, deputy director general of the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA), the delegation is visiting construction sites and meeting government agencies and private-sector representatives to exchange experience on housing development.

Nsanzineza said the discussions would cover construction materials, project financing, public-private partnerships and the maintenance of housing developments.

Rwanda estimates that it needs about 150,000 housing units annually. To reduce development costs, the government supports private developers by subsidising infrastructure, including internal roads, electricity and water, while developers participate in delivering housing projects.

"The financing model we are using is a public-private partnership kind of scheme," Nsanzineza said, adding that Rwanda was also exploring the possibility of establishing a National Housing Fund.

The visit follows a memorandum of understanding signed in Harare on May 16, 2023, covering sustainable, affordable and functional low- to medium-cost housing and new building technologies.

Mavima said Zimbabwe valued Rwanda's experience in housing delivery, particularly social housing and the institutions supporting development. Zimbabwe is also drawing lessons from Kenya and Botswana as it considers changes to its Urban Development Corporation.

The exchange will also allow Zimbabwe to share its experience in implementing its Human Settlements Policy and developing housing projects. The Rwandan delegation is scheduled to visit Dzivaresekwa Extension, Madokero and Knock Mallock.

The visits are expected to give the officials a closer look at public- and private-sector housing models, including technologies such as biodigesters and localised water systems.

The delegation includes Emmanuel Ahabwe, head of social and affordable housing development at RHA, and Eric Kananga, a senior urban development economist and focal point for the housing memorandum. Officials from Rwanda's embassy in Harare are also accompanying the team.