

Buying local a mainstay of Shoprite operations in Zambia

(January 2021) Shoprite Zambia continues to play its part in stimulating economic growth amidst calls from His Excellency, President Edgar Lungu for increased support of local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Almost 90% of the fresh produce available in Shoprite Zambia's supermarkets is sourced locally. The retailer has been procuring from local suppliers since it entered the Zambian market 25 years ago, starting with four suppliers and growing that number to the current 127.

"Our first supplier, Ezekiel Collin Mweemba, is still on our books," says Charles Bota, General Manager of Shoprite Zambia. "We specialise in establishing long-term partnerships with our local suppliers, so that their enterprises can grow alongside our business to the benefit of many more people."

Simon Chapwanya has been supplying vegetables to Shoprite Zambia for the last twenty years. His crops, farmed on 10 hectares of land along Kabwe Road outside Lusaka, include butternut, cucumber, sweet potatoes and impwa.

"Shoprite is by far my biggest client and they never disappoint. Their orders are always big and they always pay on time," says Chapwanya, who believes that the greatest advantage to him personally was that the partnership enabled him to educate his children.

Disteria Kalaluka, CEO and founder of Mitch General Dealers, started her business relationship with Shoprite Zambia in 2003. Her farming enterprise supplies spinach and lettuce to the retailer.

For her the empowerment of not only individuals, but communities is the greatest benefit of the relationship with the supermarket group. "When I started out it was only myself and two others working in my backyard. Today I farm on four hectares of land and employ seven permanent staff members. I'll remain loyal to Shoprite as they gave me my first big break," explains Kalaluka.

She also points out that the high quality standards required by the retailer has impacted her business positively: "I am able to attract other clients because of the quality of my produce - a major win for my business."

Shoprite also exports Zambian flowers to its South African stores. Khal Amazi, arguably Zambia's biggest exporter of cut flowers, supplies sweetheart roses to the Shoprite Group in South Africa and has been doing so since 2015.

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