

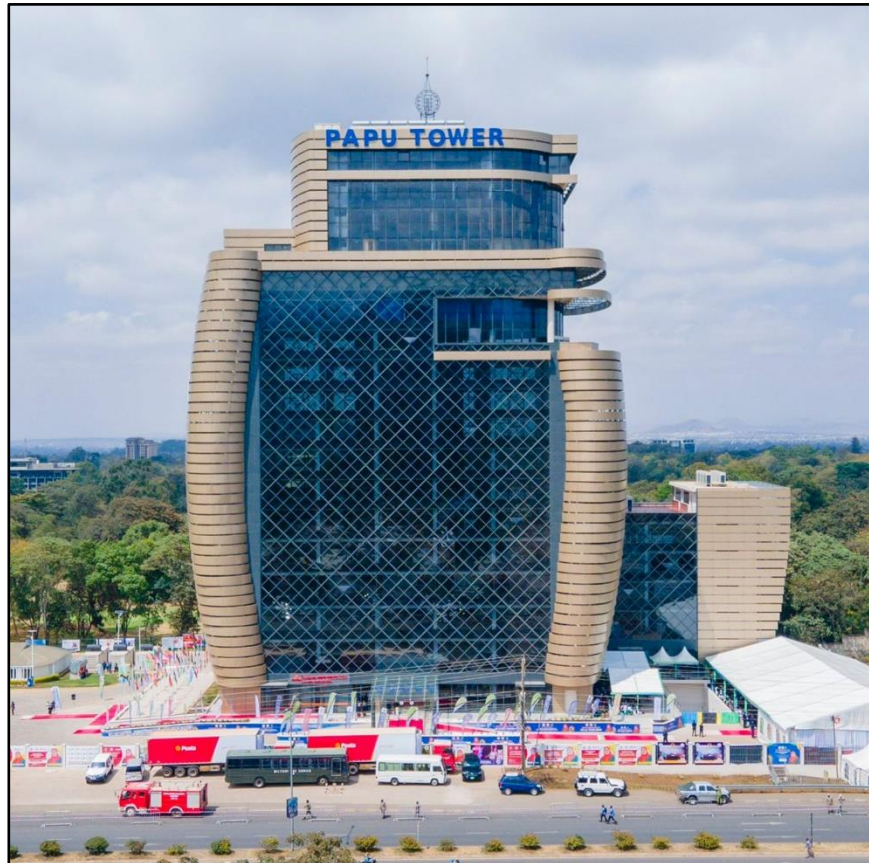
Commemorating the commissioning of ‘PAPU Tower’

Issued: 30th August, 2023

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 2 of 2023)²

Zimbabwe has issued stamps in respect of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), in 2010 for the 30th anniversary of the Union and in 2021 for the 10th Plenipotentiary Conference at Victoria Falls.

The PAPU Tower is the new headquarters for Africa's continental body, the Pan African Postal Union, a specialized agency of the African Union, that is responsible for coordinating postal development in Africa. The PAPU Tower is a joint venture project between PAPU and the United Republic of Tanzania, (represented by Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority - TCRA) where financing is 60% by PAPU and 40% by TCRA.



The construction of the PAPU Tower on a plot of land allocated by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, in line with the Host Agreement signed with the General Secretariat, was approved by the 5th Ordinary Session of the PAPU Plenipotentiary Conference held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 21st to 28th June, 2000. The project construction was commenced in January 2020, and completed in August 2023.

The Bulletin explains in much detail the justification and uses to which the building would be put. The building comprises offices, post office shops, restaurants and a conference centre. It was intended the building would also be a source of funding for PAPU.

The building was officially inaugurated on 2nd February 2023 by the President of the Federated Republic of Tanzania, Dr Samia Saluhu Hassan.

Research on eBay has also revealed that other members of the union have issued stamps commemorating the opening of PAU Tower. From the stamps it would appear that there was general agreement that members would issue stamps with an image of PAPU Tower with some other aspect of the country. Niger, Liberia, Central African Republic, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Tanzania have wildlife featured on their stamps. whilst Egypt showed the golden head of Tutankhamun and the Abu Simbel temple, and Algeria a historic mosque. There are probably more countries issuing stamps commemorating the inauguration of PAPU Tower. The issues released too date show that with some countries huge numbers of stamps and miniature sheets. We should be grateful that Zimbabwe has only issued the two stamps.

Z Value

(Stamps are enlarged for descriptive purposes)



This duty has a side view of PAPU Tower with the representation of the Great Zimbabwe monument, including the conical tower/ Printed over the conical tower are the words "The Great Zimbabwe Monument".

Quite why the wording needed to be added is a mystery, particularly as this is for local postage.

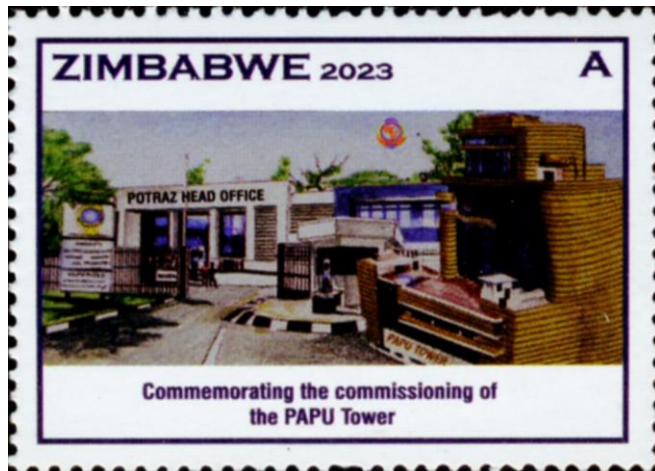
The bulletin goes into great detail about the Great Zimbabwe Monument, only a part of this is quoted below

The name "Zimbabwe" is Shona for "Great House of Stone" comprising the nouns, 'Zimba' meaning 'Great House' and 'Bwe' meaning 'stone'. The Great Zimbabwe was the capital city of the kingdom which goes by the same name and the ruins are located in the country's south-east. The Great Zimbabwe Ruins are the largest collection of ruins in Africa south of the Sahara. Located in the heart of southern Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers, they are testament to a culture of great wealth and great architectural skill. These ruins were built between the 11th and 15th centuries A.D. by the Bantu-speaking ancestors of the Shona. Great Zimbabwe was constructed and expanded for more than 300 years in a local style that eschewed rectilinearity for flowing. Great Zimbabwe was home to a cattle-herding people who also became adept at metal-working. The ruins are the largest of their kind on the Zimbabwe Plateau, but they are by no means unique. Scientific research has proved that Great Zimbabwe was founded on a site which had been sparsely inhabited in the pre-historic period, by a Bantu population of the Iron Age, the Shona.

The city grew from a community of farmers and cattle herders to a major economic centre, deriving power and wealth from its proximity to resources of gold and the trading routes along the Indian Ocean. Great Zimbabwe reached its peak with 18,000 residents by the mid-14th century. However, The Great Zimbabwe Ruins are still by a good margin the most impressive

ancient structures in sub-Saharan Africa. They are also the source of considerable pride for present-day Zimbabweans. After all, the huge chiselled walls of the Great Enclosure, with its soaring stone tower and complex chevron patterns, are a work of high engineering skill.

A Value



This duty has a side view of PAPU Tower with a modern building with the name POTRAZ HEAD OFFICE.

This brought about the mystery of what was Potraz, there was no explanation in the Bulletin.

POTRAZ turns out to be the acronym of the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe, a body responsible for the issuing of licences in the postal and telecommunications sector. A regulatory body formed by Government formed in February 2001 under the Postal & Telecommunications Act. This was the same act that “privatised” the post office services as Zimbabwe Posts (Pvt) Ltd.

The building illustrated on the stamp is the headquarters of POTRAZ, picture opposite. It is evident from the photo that the wording shown on the stamp does not exist on the building.

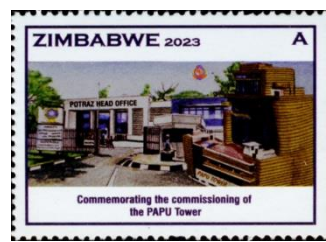
The building is situated in the Mount Pleasant Business Park on Performance Close, which is just off the Golden Stairs Road, north of Harare city centre



The building is situated on a 3.5 acre (1.4 hectares), its construction commenced in March 2012 and was opened by the new President, E D Mnangagwa on 16th July 2018. The two storey building comprises offices, conference rooms, canteen and entertainment facilities. In addition, the building considers the employees “wellness” with gymnasium, swimming pool, and basketball and tennis courts. Greater detail on its design and facilities are contained in the Bulletin

The building perfectly illustrates what has gone wrong in Zimbabwe, with a government run regulatory authority, building for itself a state-of-the-art building for a function that, probably, does not require the number of staff a building of this size requires.

The Stamps



Catalogue Listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
1484	877	Z	PAPU Tower with The Great Zimbabwe Monument
1485	878	A	PAPU Tower with POTRAZ Head Office

Note Both stamps are inscribed “Commemorating the commissioning of PAPU Tower”

Technical details

Stamp size:	Sheet stamps: 42 x 28 mm
Sheet Size:	50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet
Photographs:	Fredwill Designs
Paper:	ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as “Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper”. This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be very dark
Print colours:	Cyan, magenta, yellow & black
Perforations:	SG 14½ x 14; ZSC 14¼ x 14 Top margin: Perforated through Other margins: Imperforate
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printer’s Imprint:	Sheet stamps only - Bottom margin, below Row 10 Column 3. Imprint printed in black
Cylinder numbers:	Sheet stamps only - Top margin above R1/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Colour register:	Sheet stamps only - Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R1/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow,

black

Sheet Value:	Sheet stamps only - Top margin, above R1/5, printed in black			
Sheet Number:	Sheet stamps only - Type SN 7 with printed 'ZIMPOST' prefix, in red ink, right margin opposite R1/5 reading down			
Bar codes:	Sheet stamps only - Opposite R10/5, printed in black, numbers:			
	Z	2 009113		
	A	2 009113		
	E	2 009113		
	R	2 009113		
Print numbers:	Z	10,000	A	10,000
Issue date:	30 th August, 2023			

Postal Rates

Postal rates are difficult to determine at this time, no schedule of rates is available to view. However, Bulletin 1 of 2023² for this issue provided a schedule of rates at the time of issue

Postal rates applicable as at date of issue –

Z =	US\$1.60	A =	US\$4.20
E =	US\$5.20	R =	US\$6.20

Statement in the bulletin – “ZWL rates charged at prevailing bank rate of that day”. The bank rate in the latter half of August 2023 was circa ZW\$4,460: US\$1. Note the largest denomination of local bank note was ZW\$100, thus requiring 714 bank notes to pay the local postage rate.

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been reported.

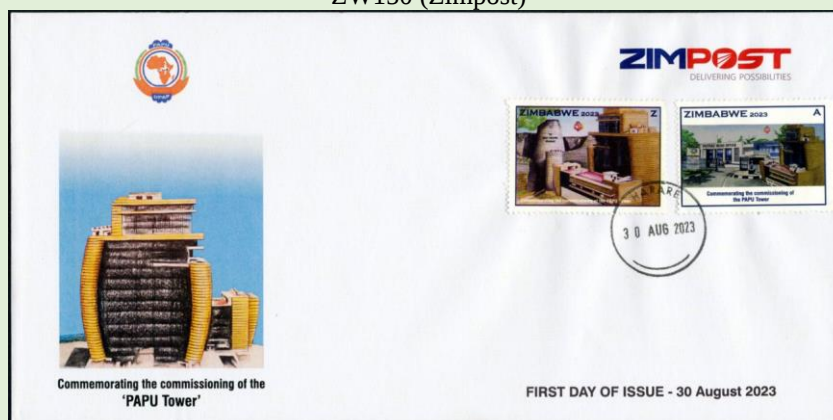
Unlisted Varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps. It is noted that there a fair amount of fine detail so some double printing can be expected.

First Day Cover

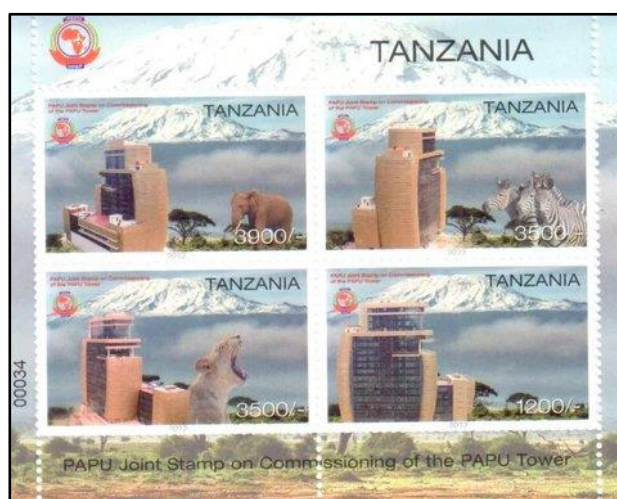
Zimpost produced a First Day Cover, which was postmarked by the Philatelic Bureau with a postmark reading “First Day of Issue/Harare”.

ZW150 (Zimpost)



220 x 110 mm

Related material



Miniature sheet of the PAPU Tower inauguration issued by Tanzania.
Further stamps on this theme have been issued by other African postal authorities.

Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear, and is now published on the Rhodesian Study Circle website.
2. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 2 of 2023